PRIVATE EYE

No. 982
Friday
6 August '99

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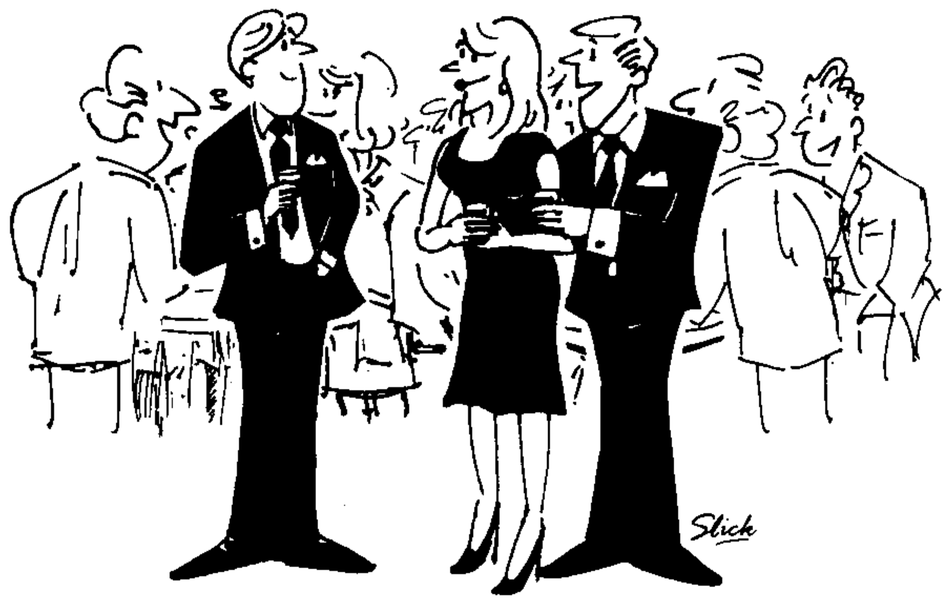
NEW RACING SHOCK

THE NATION'S 99-1 FAVOURITE

The Pusser's Guide to Naval slang

Let me introduce you to Andrew. He's got a pink ticket from his improper fraction to come on the toot with us tonight.

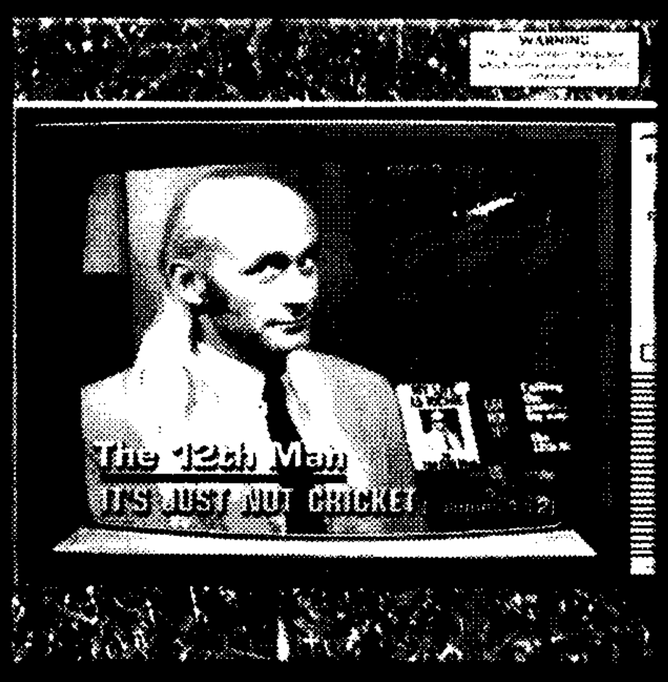


***TRANSLATION:** Andrew's been given permission from his wife to come out partying with us tonight.*

Everyone loves a sailor, a bit of the old yo ho ho, ships that pass in the night and all that rum sort of thing. So if you meet a sailor on his run ashore, make sure you know the correct DecoRUM and mix your cocktails with the right Navy Rum.

It's Pusser's . . . don't you know?

Who the hell is The 12th Man?



The 12th Man is AUSTRALIA'S LEGENDARY, MILLION-SELLING CRICKET COMEDIAN. His outrageous recordings are OFF-THE-WALL, RUDE and definitely CRUDE SEND-UPS of cricket, and more particularly, the Australian commentators led by RICHIE BENAUD, TONY GREIG, BILL LAWRY and IAN CHAPPELL. Now, at last, THE 12TH MAN, the mad Aussie so many English cricket fans have heard about, but not actually heard, is AVAILABLE in the UK. All the 12th Man's silliest moments are on a SPECIALLY PRICED DOUBLE ALBUM set entitled "IT'S JUST NOT CRICKET" (Vols. 1 & 2)

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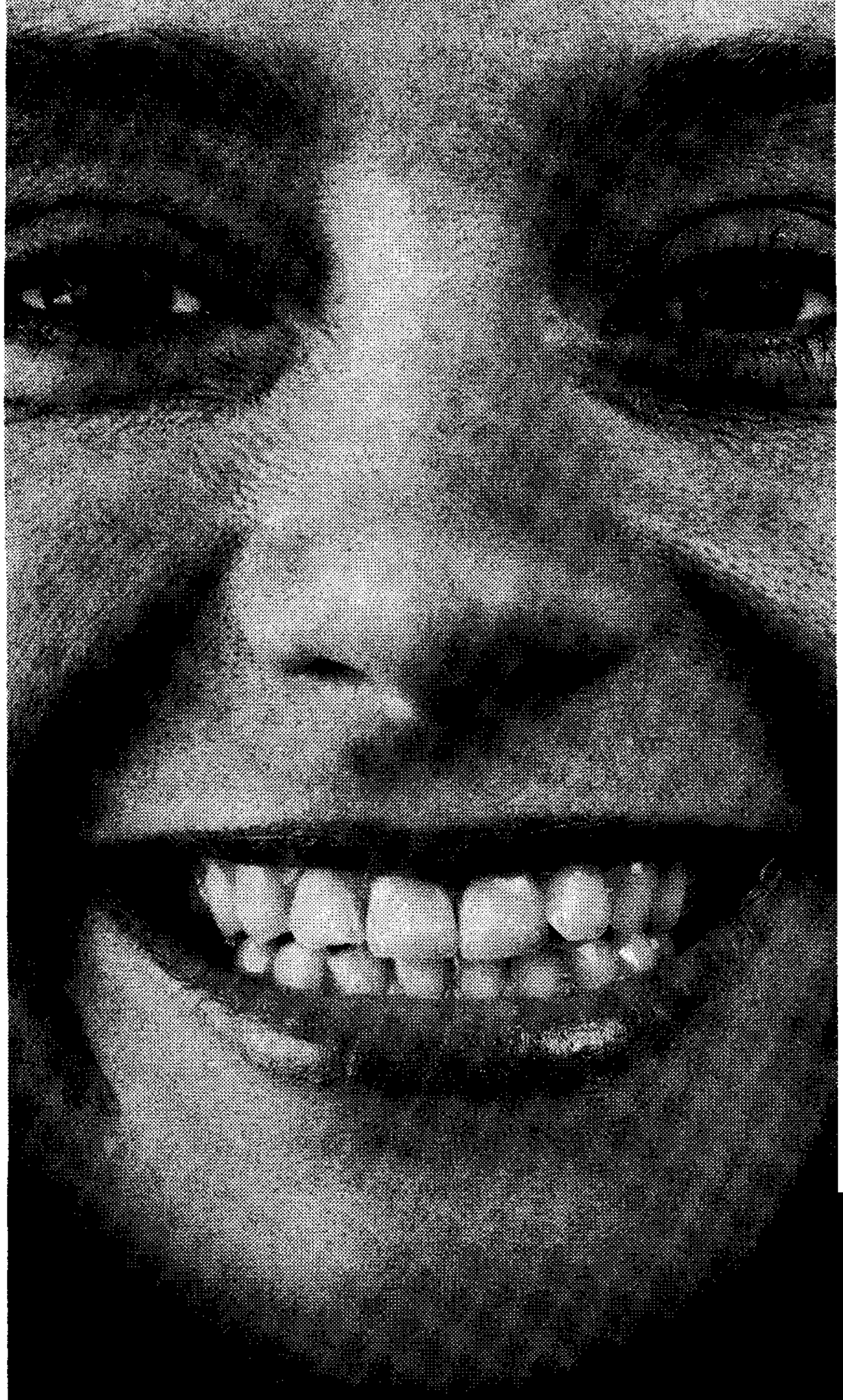

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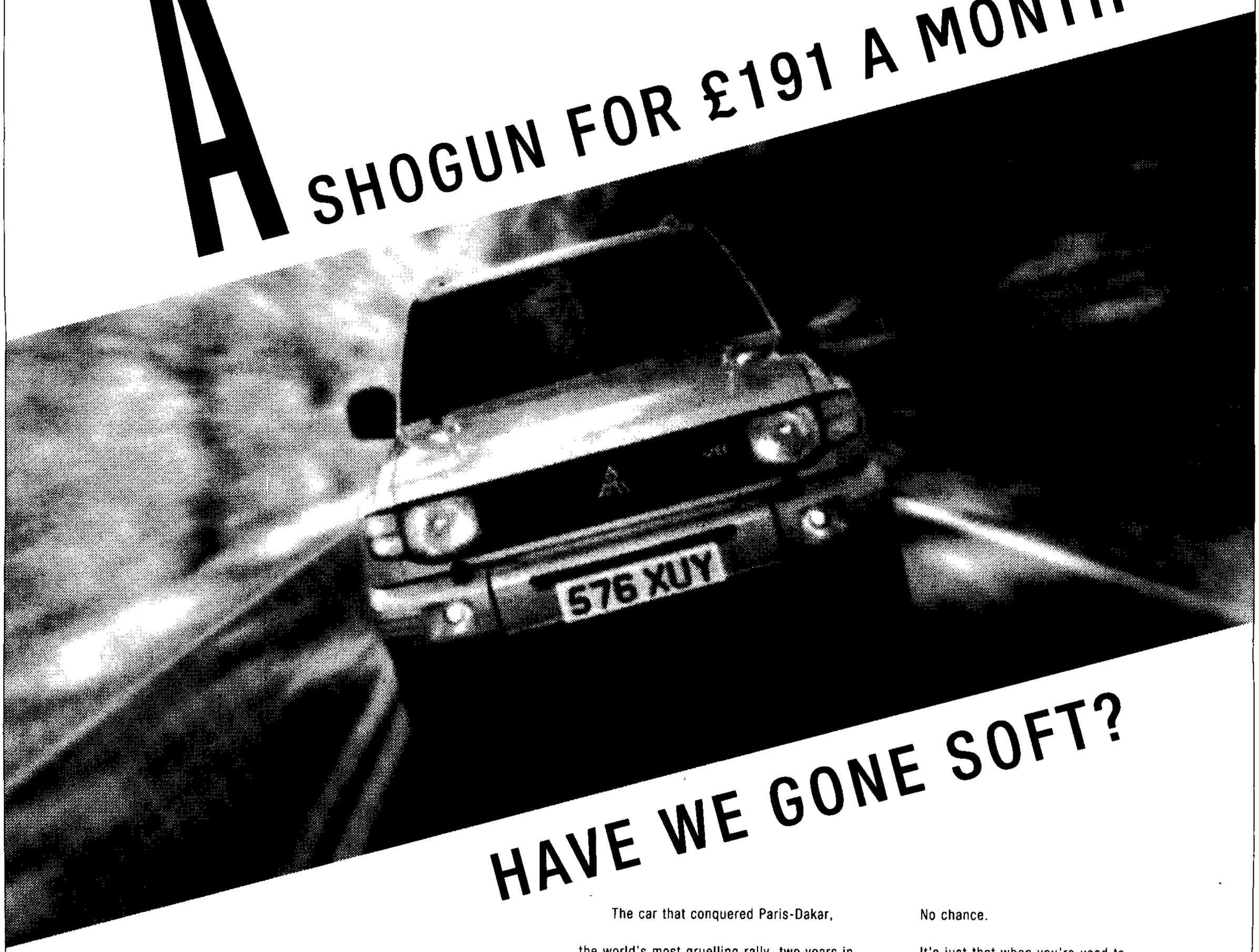

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Gnome

GNOMEMAX is proud to announce the launch of a new concept in journalism – a magazine called simply "PUFF" with an estimated circulation of over 200 million readers before the first edition has even appeared.

Puff, edited by Tina Brownnose, perhaps the most famous journalist of this or any other generation, will be unlike any magazine ever seen before.

Instead of featuring articles that the editor might consider of interest, it will contain shameless in-depth plugs for stars of Gnomemax studios – household names, such as Esmerelda Flop, Minnie Nobody, Tom Turkey Junior and Patty de la Pantyline.

The whole world has been talking about Puff for months and now at last it is freely available on the streets where it has been thrown away by disappointed buyers. *(Shurely "read avidly by New York's movers and shakers?" T.B.)*

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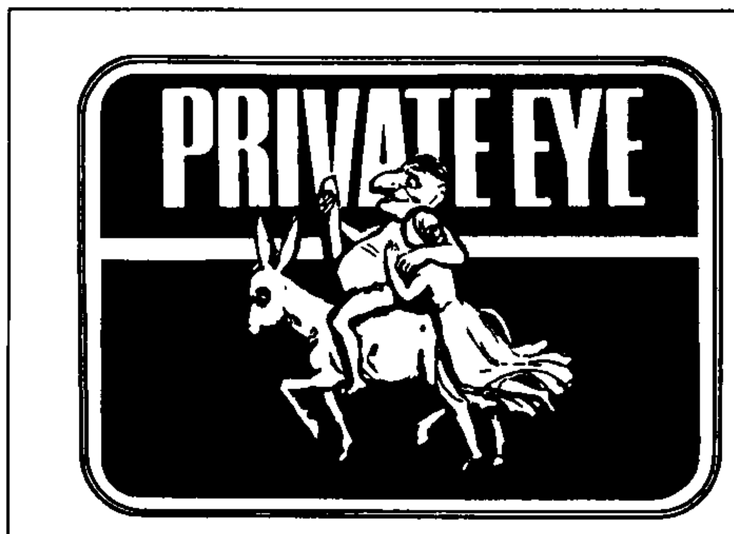


COLOUR SECTION

DAVID Mckilligan, Britain's former high commissioner in Belize, has been quick to rebut claims that *The Times* "censored" part of a letter he sent to the paper.

The key second paragraph, which stated that Michael Ashcroft had acted "entirely correctly", was indeed deleted. But *The Times* insisted that this was only for "reasons of space", and Mckilligan loyally issued a statement denying that his views had been misrepresented.

How odd, then, that it was Mckilligan himself who telephoned a *Mail on Sunday* hack to reveal the "editing" of his letter. Unprompted and clearly irritated, he then faxed through his original version and pointed out the differences with the published text.

If Mckilligan was so happy with the way his letter was presented, why was he so eager to point out the omissions? No doubt the answer will emerge when Ashcroft's libel suit reaches the High Court later this year.

THE promotion of Kate Hoey to replace Tony Banks as the government's offender-in-chief prompted some swift rewriting of history at the Press Association.

The profile put out by PA contained this brief summary of Hoey's time over the water – "She was born and educated in Northern Ireland but rarely talks publicly about Ulster's problems".

Not that rarely. *Eye* readers may recall Hoey's widely varied pronouncements on the troubles. In 1972 she was arrested (and later cleared) on an anti-internment rally in London, and seventeen years later when she joined the Commons she was happy to declare that she "yearned for a united Ireland" (*Eye* 875). By the mid-nineties however, she had reverted to Unionism, campaigning for hardliner Bob McCartney and praising David Trimble for his "determination" and "plain speaking" – days before his prominent role at the 1996 Drumcree protest.

Hoey's many and varied public pronouncements would seem, however, to have escaped the notice of the Press Association.

THE DTI's puff for their new "Competitiveness Council" makes curious reading. "Some of Britain's youngest, brightest entrepreneurs are joining Stephen Byers to bring fresh vision, creativity and drive to the government's competitiveness agenda," it claims. So who are the stars of this next generation of Bransons?

Fresh-faced 48-year-old CK Chow, chief executive GKN sits beside the youthful Sir Dick Evans, chair of British Aerospace, a sprightly 57, both of whom can share their vision of … flogging tanks and helicopters to assorted dictatorships. And they are joined by usual suspects Peter Bonfield of BT (barely out of the cradle at 54), unmatched for creativity in his methods of working round industry regulator Oftel, and John Browne of Labour's favourite oil company BP, a mere 50, whose company has the drive to, er, accept falsified safety records and the intimidation of workers in Alaska. A fresh vision indeed!

SOUND financial sense has seen Blair babe Melanie Johnson rise swiftly since she joined Parliament in 1997 to the junior ranks of the Treasury in the latest reshuffle.

Johnson claimed the dubious honour of receiving the largest payment to a new Labour MP when she accepted a donation of £20,000 from Swiss drugs giant Roche whose UK operation is based in Johnson's constituency, Welwyn Hatfield (see *Eye* 972).

The company produces the controversial anti-acne drug Roccuane and tranquillisers which have been the subject of a recent health select committee hearing.

In May Roche paid $500m to the US Justice Department and its former marketing director was sentenced to four months imprisonment after an investigation into a world-wide conspiracy to fix the prices of vitamins.

FORMER INDUSTRY minister John Battle's reshuffle to the Foreign Office will mean he is no longer around to argue over competition issues surrounding the bid by Electricité de France (EdF) to corner the British electricity market.

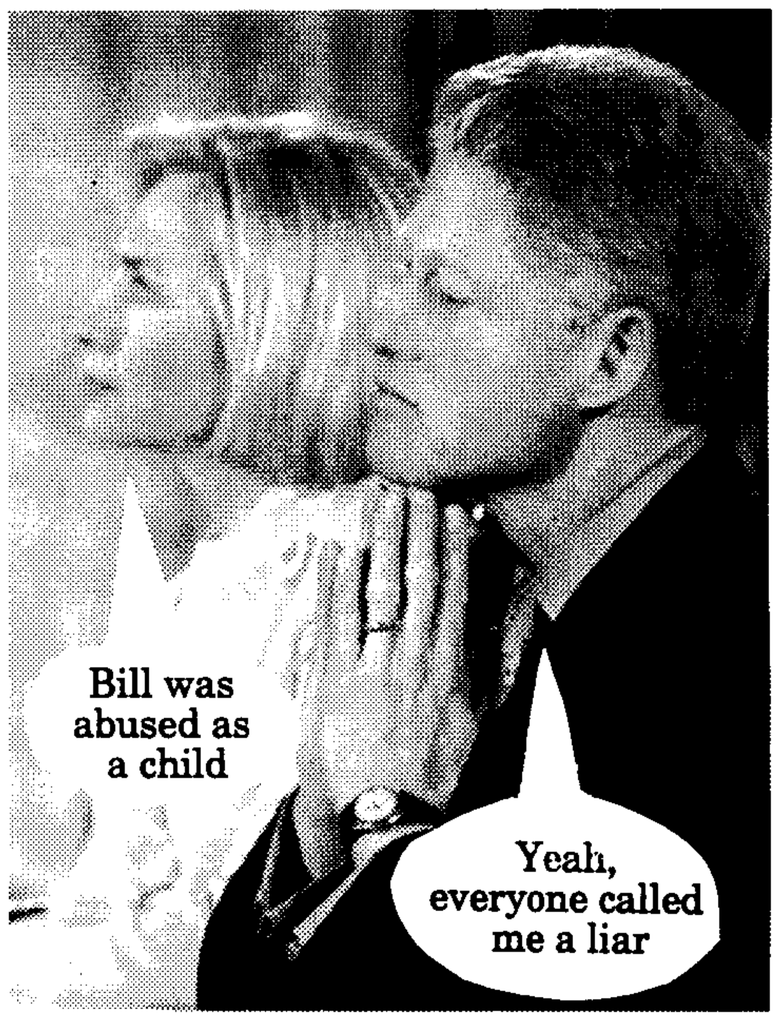
EdF's £1.9 billion takeover of London Electricity was cleared in January and in June it was announced the French state-owned company was the leading bidder for South West Electricity.

Battle's strong views on the subject are not shared by all at the DTI. Jo Moore who became one of two special advisers to Stephen Byers in February worked before that for lobbying firm Westminster Strategy. One of the major clients during Moore's time at Westminster Strategy? None other than Electricité de France.

THE ministry of defence continues to be strangely reticent over the subject of depleted uranium, used as an armour piercing coating for bullets and missiles in both the Gulf and Balkan wars.

Last week armed forces minister Doug Henderson was accused of misleading the defence select committee by claiming that he had never received any evidence which linked the use of DU weapons with cancer or birth deformities. The Gulf veterans and families association, however, claim that they handed a copy of a study by Professor Harl Sharma of the university of Waterloo in Canada to Henderson personally on 18 March. Sharma's report showed readings from gulf veterans in the UK, America, Canada and Iraq which showed readings of up to 100 times the recommended safe level of radioactivity. On 28 April Henderson told the committee that "we have not received [any] evidence".

By 19 July Henderson must have found the report in his in-tray, because he confessed to being "aware" of it in a reply to a parliamentary question from Helen Jackson MP.



Street Of Shame

HEY ho! Hey ho! And off on hols they go! But in the great reshuffle that never was, who emerged looking the most stupid? The brown nosing lobby hacks and tame columnists who discovered that Alastair Campbell was not to play ball with them, so they had to second guess him? Or was it Tony Blair and Alastair Campbell, who let the speculation run on as government departments ground to a halt?

Unforgettable radio moments were experienced as fully signed-up members of "new" Labour's New Commonwealth, The *Times*' Peter Riddell and The *Independent*'s Anne McElvoy, were left to explain how their predictions of Cabinet Ministers on the move had resulted in, erm, precisely no Cabinet Ministers on the move. Meanwhile, Campbell, in his first post "reshuffle" lobby briefing rubbed assembled hacks noses in it by reminding them of all of their piss poor predictions. For Campbell had been aghast to discover that a number of hacks had gathered in the Commons Press Gallery in order to pool "talent" and second-guess Blair. The Blair quartet of advisers, Alastair Campbell, Peter Mandelson, Jonathan Powell and Sally Morgan, will have enjoyed the media's discomfort. But they have overlooked one important by-product of this unseemly joust with the political press corps – for the [temporary] survivors of the great second reshuffle have been left smarting by the sheer scale of the briefings whispered against them. The dear leader may enjoy reading the column inches devoted to his singular achievements as the great helmsman, yet one day when he needs a few trusty oarsmen; they will all have jumped overboard.

NO sooner was Tony Blair's reshuffle of junior ranks over, before the New Commonwealth of toadying hacks had begun speculating on the next reshuffle.

Having confidently predicted the return of Mandy Mandelson to variously a) the Northern Ireland Office, as a replacement to Mo Mowlam, b) the Home Office and c) the Foreign Office, to prepare to inherit Robin Cook's crown, the likely departure of George Robertson to Nato, sparked the twittering pack off again. So who would replace Robertson as Secretary of State for Defence, they all crowed. Why Mandy Mandelson, of course! Pundits were also united in predicting that Blair's real night of the long knives will come in the autumn. So having initially lambasted Blair for "being weak" in failing to take the axe to "old" Labour, the prospect of months more mind-numbing speculation now drove the pack to conclude that Blair had never planned to despatch Dobson, Prescott, Mowlam et al. Instead the master strategist was not weak but amazingly strong, and everything was going to plan.

Number crunching

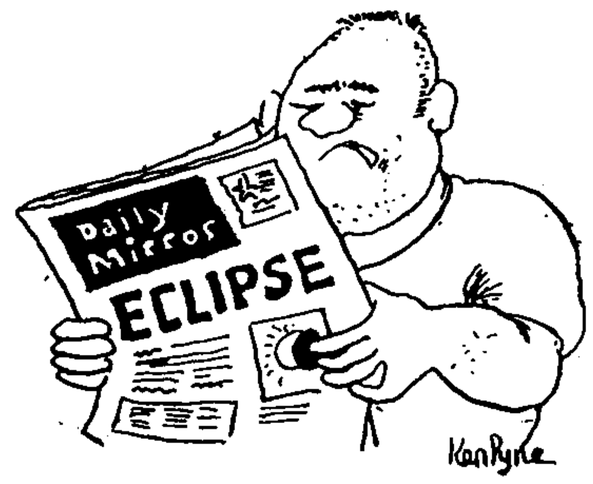
175 Column inches of predictions in broadsheets in week before reshuffle

1 Number of changes at cabinet level announced in reshuffle

A FEW days after helping compile an instant history of the Kosovo crisis, the *Observer*'s political editor Patrick Wintour was talking to Nato commander General Wesley Clark.

"Read your big piece on the war," the general muttered, adding rather loftily that although there were a few mistakes it was "fairly accurate, fairly accurate".

"Just like your bombing campaign, then," Wintour replied.



"You get a Mirror so you don't have to look directly at the Sun"

IT's a snake pit at the *Guardian*. The rumours surrounding the sudden departure of European editor Martin "Sweetie" Walker from the newspaper are many and wild. Allegations of massive expenses fraud and assorted skullduggery are rife throughout the Street of Shame.

Unfortunately, however, such rumours have little base in fact. Walker was indeed accused of two expense frauds, but the *Guardian* dropped them both. The first, that he was subletting his house in Brussels, was demonstratably untrue and was abandoned very quickly. The second, that he was falsely claiming for the school fees of his daughter, has now also gone the same way. Walker, like most other foreign correspondents, was provided with a portion of his children's education costs, so that his daughters could attend a school in Brussels, where he was based. Trouble arose, however, when one of his daughters moved back to a boarding school in England. The fees of this school were in fact higher than those of her previous one, but Walker continued to claim the same amount from his employers and made up the difference himself. However, he didn't tell the *Guardian*, which led to the suspicion that he was up to no good.

This was enough to allow an accusation of dishonesty against Walker which delighted a brigade of Sweetie-haters at the *Guardian*. However, the NUJ then got involved on Walker's side, which led to the curious spectacle of a particularly Spartist union chapel eagerly defending the rights of their members to put their children through private education. Their efforts on Walker's behalf were successful, and the two sides agreed that there were no charges to answer. Walker has now departed from the *Guardian* and its particularly vicious brand of office politics, along with a generous public testimonial and a couple of months' money.

Enemies of Sweetie claim the feeble and hypocritical *Guardian* has let off a journalist lightly. Friends of Sweetie claim that the ruthless and unpleasant *Guardian* has persecuted an innocent man. The confidentiality agreement signed between the two sides means that neither of the participants can comment.

O·B·N

Look at the style. Wonder at the charm. Be dazzled by the sheer quality of the boy... It is a real pleasure for me to say: "I like what I see." ...There are few women alive who wouldn't want a piece of his action... he handles himself with such self-assured elegance... His dress sense was immaculate... William's performance stamps him as the star I, and everybody else who cares, always thought he was from the moment he was born.

James Whitaker
The Mirror

£10 paid for all submissions put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

CURRANTBUNS

JUST FANCY THAT!

"MURDOCH the Luddite sounds an unnatural handle for the man who overturned the ancient technology of Fleet Street. The News Corporation boss says he reckons the internet will destroy more businesses than it will create... He says he does not see any rush to get on board this electronic bandwagon."

— *Telegraph*, 13th January 1999

"LAST week Mr Murdoch broke off a honeymoon with Wendy Deng, his third wife, and flew to London to announce a joint venture with Softbank, the world's largest internet investor, and his plans to bring up to 12 of America's leading internet companies to Britain."

— *Financial Post*, 6th July 1999

"NEWS Corporation will introduce several new online services and products this summer as part of an "enormously aggressive" attempt to transform the media group into an internet company, James Murdoch said yesterday".

— *Guardian*, 10th July 1999

"THE internet is delivering power to the people. At last, the consumer is king. Communism has collapsed – but here is a force that is truly taking power from the few and transferring it to the many. It has happened in America. It will happen here. Perfect information. Perfect democracy. Perfect competition. Choice for all."

— Editorial, *Sun*, 2nd August 1999

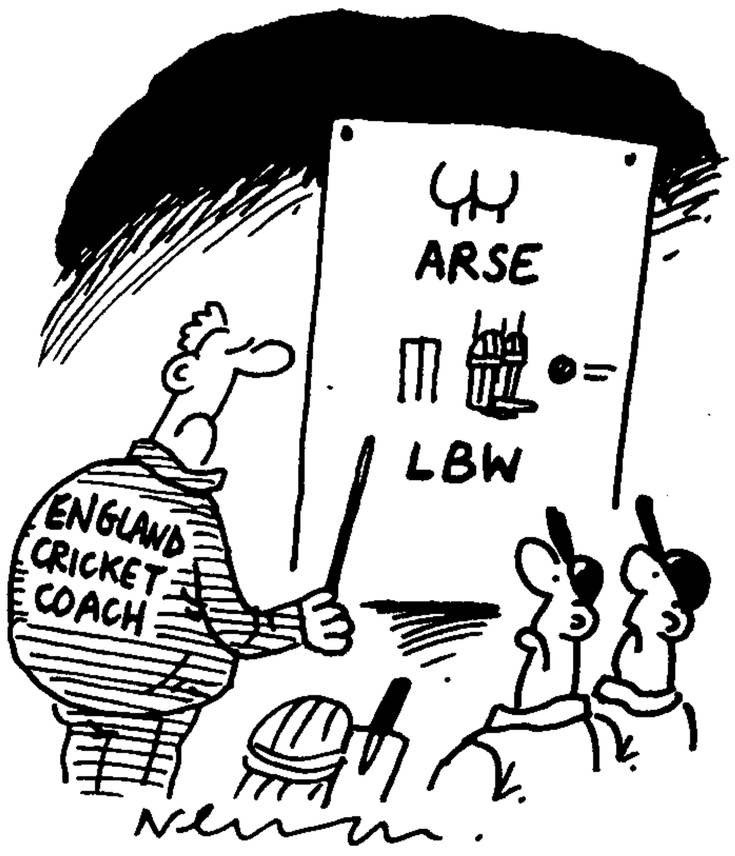
FAYED AND GARBAGE

The Editor writes

A FEW weeks ago I wrote a letter to an *Eye* contributor and I was surprised to see it turn up in the pages of *Punch* magazine. On closer examination I realised that what they had reproduced was not the letter that I actually sent but a draft version of it which I had thrown in the bin. How on earth had *Punch* got hold of this? Whilst I have always known that *Punch* is full of rubbish and that its proprietor deals in rubbish I had not realised before that this was the literal truth.

But there it is. Fayed appears to be so desperate to find out something to discredit *Private Eye* that he has authorised his magazine to start buying up the contents of our bins. The last person to do this was James Goldsmith. The man who actually takes the rubbish from outside the office is called Benjamin Pell, a sad figure who lives in North London and makes a living by stealing people's rubbish in the middle of the night, sifting through it in his garden and then selling it to unscrupulous customers. Pell, however, had a misfortune recently when about fifteen sacks of rubbish were recovered from his van including a sackful that he had taken from *Private Eye*. This was stolen on our last Press Day and was presumably also on its way to Fayed's magazine but it is not entirely clear where all the other sacks were going.

Considering that these had been stolen from lawyers' offices, television companies and celebrity agents it might well be worth those involved finding out. If they are interested, they might suggest to the police that they should go round to Pell's house and find out who else is buying up all this rubbish. A number of policemen have explained to me that under section 22 of the Theft Act what Pell's buyers have been doing is handling stolen goods. Surely Mr Fayed will not end up in the dock on a charge of handling stolen property? Not after all his problems with the safety deposit boxes at Harrods? How on earth will he ever get a passport if people get the idea that he is no better than a common thief who rummages around in wastepaper bins?



HEARTWARMING CHARITY STORY

SOME interesting alliances are revealed by a charity "chain letter" currently doing the rounds.

Recipients are supposed to send the letter to 10 of their best friends, each of whom has to donate £2 to Great Ormond Street hospital and then send copies to 10 of *their* friends. Thus we now know that *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan's dearest chums include Kelvin Mackenzie, Max Clifford and, er, Mohamed Al Fayed.

And whom did Fayed choose in his turn? Porn-baron Richard Desmond (publisher of *Asian Babes* and other wholesome top-shelf publications), PR man Brian Basham, Barry Daniels of the Rhys Daniels Trust, Sir Trevor Macdonald, Desmond Wilcox, Peter Sissons, Nick Pollard of BSkyB, Rory Bremner, *Punch* editor James Steen – and Richard "Mr Clean" Branson.

Only a few months ago Fayed sent a threatening letter to Branson after discovering that Tom Bower's unauthorised biography of the Phoney Pharaoh was being serialised in the Virgin Airlines in-flight magazine. Now that Bower is writing an unauthorised life of Branson, however, an unlikely friendship has blossomed, with the two tycoons meeting for lunch to compare notes about "the Bower problem". Sweet, eh?

CHURCH NEWS

AFTER all the hoo-ha at Westminster Abbey over the sacking of organist Martin Neary, it is puzzling that the latest scandal has attracted barely a mention in the press.

Having sacked Neary and his wife for a "lack of openness" in their financial dealings, whilst acknowledging that they were never dishonest, it has now emerged that senior clergy have been borrowing whopping great sums of money from the Abbey coffers, unsecured and at advantageous interest rates. Dean Wesley Carr himself borrowed £45,000 to buy a holiday cottage at interest below the then-base rate. All this emerged, long after the event, in a tiny footnote to the accounts – accounts not volunteered but demanded after much correspondence between a member of the congregation and the Abbey. Lack of openness or what?

Meanwhile, there is a black hole in the accounts of about £500,000 of new "administrative expenditure" – mostly spent on persecuting the Nearys. Contrast this with the £84,000 the Abbey managed to give away in charitable donations, just one percent of its income.

And what of the Nearys? People still wonder how Carr persuaded Lord Jauncey to uphold their dismissal when there was no dishonesty and the Abbey authorities had every opportunity to know exactly what was going on. The answer now emerging is a story of Machiavellian brilliance on the part of the Dean. He persuaded his colleagues on Chapter, three canons, that the Nearys were beyond the pale. Quite whether they saw the Nearys' entire defence to the charges or a bowdlerised report of the disciplinary proceedings is not entirely clear. Anyway, the canons came out publicly in the Dean's support and the rest was easy: the law deemed that a breakdown in trust is sufficient ground for summary dismissal. Carr had ensured that the canons no longer trusted the Nearys... QED. Jauncey had no option but to uphold the dismissal.

Carr and his pals, who have never been shy about buying expensive legal advice, will have made sure that their loans from the Abbey are completely kosher. They say that no member of Chapter (ie, trustee of the Abbey) has been involved in a decision about his own loan. So that's all right, then. Instead, it seems they take turns to slip out of the room whilst their chums discuss their respective cases. Happily for Carr, the charity commissioners, who would take a frosty view of such cosiness in a regular charity, appear to have little power over the Abbey with its charter from Queen Elizabeth I, which exempts them more or less from any outside scrutiny.

HACKWATCH

Sunday Times Scoops

WHEN *Sunday Times* editor John Witherow was interviewed by the *Guardian* in February, he confessed that his paper had missed out on the Mandelson home-loan, the Derek Draper scandal and every other story of the past two years. "I think our news coverage remains fairly, steadily good but we haven't had those high points and we are acutely conscious of it," he mused. However, Witherow and his news team were urgently "looking at how investigations can be more productive".

The results speak for themselves. In recent months the *Sunday Times* has had a blizzard of exclusives – even if, for some inexplicable reason, no other newspaper has seen fit to follow them up...

4 April. "Tower of Babel is 'found' near the Black Sea". The inverted commas around the word "found" are a wise precaution, as many experts doubt the paper's claim that the Tower is lurking undiscovered in eastern Turkey. Most archaeologists believe Babel was located in Mesopotamian Babylon, while others suspect that the mythical building never existed at all.

18 April. Social affairs editor John Harlow breaks the news that most people have only three really close friends. The shock findings are confirmed by TV presenter Mariella Frostrup. "I have a small, select group of close friends," she tells him. "I could not function without them."

25 April. "Romeo and Juliet may not have recognised it," John Harlow reports, "but this is the secret of love." Research by top American psychologist Donn Byrne – "revealed here for the first time" – suggests that "love is a mix of five factors: sexual attraction; psychological arousal; a desire for intimacy; an intense need to be wanted and agreed with; and a recurring fear of losing the loved one". Fancy!

2 May. John Harlow has yet more news from the frontiers of research: American psychologist Prof. Bella DePaulo has found that intelligent people make better liars than stupid people. Her startling conclusion is that "education gives some people the vocabulary and confidence to deceive", enabling them to produce "more sophisticated and plausible" lies.

9 May. Hold the front page – at last the *Sunday Times* has some up-to-the-minute news: "Neil Tipped For BBC Job". According to unnamed "sources", the paper's former editor Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill is a "serious contender" for the director-generalship.

16 May. John Harlow scoops the world again. The new edition of *Burke's Peerage* is to "reveal" that many aristocrats are descended from children born out of wedlock, such as the offspring of Charles I's mistresses. "The upper classes will never be the same again," he predicts.

23 May. An English archaeologist has discovered a lost kingdom in Nigeria which may "possibly" be that of the fabled Queen of Sheba. (Or, then again, possibly not, since it hasn't actually been excavated.) Readers yearning for more contemporary news are informed that the Queen may sail down the Thames in a crystal barge to open the Millennium Dome. Oh, and Charlie Dimmock is writing a gardening book. Arts editor Richard Brooks asks why it is called *Fun In The Garden*. "I wanted a book which would teach people to have fun in gardens," she discloses.

30 May. An in-depth *Sunday Times* probe discovers that restaurateurs are using slightly smaller tables than 20 years ago in order to accommodate more diners. The news is described as "one of the worst examples of 'rip-off' Britain". Equally shocking is the revelation that certain mammals, including bottle-nosed dolphins and grey squirrels, may sometimes have homosexual tendencies. "The birds and the bees will never be the same again," science correspondent Steve Farrar raves.

6 June. "REVEALED: THE QUEEN'S BLACK ANCESTORS" a headline screams. But, er, which queen? "An American genealogist has established that Queen Charlotte, the wife of George III, was directly descended from the illegitimate son of an African mistress in the Portuguese royal house." And, er, how directly? "Mario Valdes, a professional genealogist from Boston, Massachusetts... has traced Charlotte's ancestry to the fifth king of Portugal, Afonso III, who had an illegitimate son with his Moorish mistress, Madalena Gil, in 1249." News doesn't come any hotter than this. Not to be outdone, social affairs editor John Harlow reports the discovery by American psychologists that many people find their first kiss "memorable". Brad Pitt, for instance, still remembers kissing a girl when he was 12 – but, as Harlow sensationally reveals, "it is not only celebrities who recall the big event".

20 June. Time for religious affairs correspondent Christopher Morgan to show his investigative prowess. "It can now be revealed," he announces, that the Earl of Wessex, Prince Edward's new title, is also the name of a character in *Shakespeare in Love*.

4 July. If in doubt, ring an American scientist. The technique yields another scoop for science correspondent Steve Farrar: after close study of the cosmos, Dr Guillermo Gonzalez of the University of Washington reckons that "intelligent life is rare" and "may be unique to Earth". But there's plenty of it in the *Sunday Times* news pages. "An insider on *Austin Powers, The Spy Who Shagged Me*, one of the summer's most successful films, has revealed that the character was inspired by James Bond – and also by the photographer David Bailey," the paper reports. "Groovy baby, as Powers might say."

11 July. "Robin Hood, the prince of thieves, may also have been the forest queen." Titter ye not: new research – obtained exclusively by the *Sunday Times* – suggests that he might have been gay. "The ballads could not say outright that he was gay because of the prevailing moral climate," argues Professor Stephen Knight of Cardiff University. However, "the green wood itself is a symbol of virility and the references to arrows, quivers and swords make it clear, too."

18 July. Never let it be said that the *Sunday Times* neglects the big issues. "Big Bang machine could destroy Earth," warns science editor Jonathan Leake, noting that a nuclear accelerator being built on Long Island "might" accidentally wipe out the Earth and create a black hole within the next couple of years. Later in the story Leake admits that the chances of such an apocalypse are "infinitesimally small".

25 July. "Forget the traditional Valentine card message – love is not for ever." This is the astonishing conclusion reached by "one of the world's top researchers into the nature of romance", Professor Cindy Hazan of Cornell University, New York. In many cases, she says, the intense rapture of passionate infatuation wears off after two or three years. "By that time, couples have either parted or decided that they are easy enough with each other to stay together."

As *Sunday Times* readers must often find themselves muttering: who would have thought it?

MODESTY UPDATE

I'm so well known among followers of the Royal Family that a great cheer goes up when I arrive at Clarence House to cover the Queen Mother's birthday – I feel like royalty myself!

– BBC reporter Jenny Bond, *Radio Times*

IN THE TEAROOM

SO NOW we know who Tony Blair wants to be governing Britain in the early years of the forthcoming "progressive century". Last week's reshuffle was not the half-hearted fumbling of an exhausted prime minister of early reports. As the significance of the detail sinks in, it's clear that Blair has cleverly positioned his firmest supporters in the key minister of state jobs from which new entrants to the cabinet will be drawn. Paul Boateng, confirmed as Jack Straw's deputy, looks a good bet to become Home Secretary sometime in the next five years. Brian Wilson, now number two at the Scottish Office, could well find himself promoted rather sooner – when his boss John Reid replaces NATO-bound George Robertson at defence. Veteran Kinnockites Patricia Hewitt and Charles Clarke have also advanced to the threshold of greatness, along with Liz Symons, who's been given the challenging job of whipping the grasping, thieving, or merely incompetent defence contractors into line.

Meanwhile, the spinners have moved on to tell us what a tough fight John Prescott put up to save his crony, the pisspoor Alan Meale. Here's a nice coincidence of interest. Prescott wants to be seen as someone who stood by his mates when the knives were out. Blair wants to be seen as someone who can stand up to his deputy's angry rants and defeat him. Everyone's a winner; except poor old Meale.

Over at the Foreign Office, Robin Cook is smugly congratulating himself on securing the services of Peter Hain. Cook thinks Hain still retains a touch of the old radicalism and can be relied on to back him when things get rough with Number 10. But Hain's cheerful compliance with the Blairites in fixing Alun Michael's victory over Rhodri Morgan in Wales means he's just as likely to prove a Number 10 nark. His first job will be to hose down furious South African mineworkers who've lost their jobs through Gordon Brown's rashly trumpeted decision to sell off our gold reserves. Let's see how he handles that.

Only one major piece of the jigsaw remains to be fitted in for the "progressive century" picture to be complete. That's the Liberal Democrats.

This week the Lib Dems have to make a historic decision. Charles Kennedy's pitch is that if they want to be taken seriously in British politics, they should vote for him. The problem is: if you want to be taken seriously in politics, you tend not to join the Lib Dems. So it is possible that they will opt for the Simon Pure approach and vote for that nice-but-useless Mr Hughes from Bermondsey. Or worse: that the vagaries of proportional representation will throw up a freak result, thereby discrediting the party and its one big idea. We'll know if all those amiable, bearded blokes in baggy jumpers have opted for collective political suicide next Monday.

'Urquhart'

LABOUR MPs are being pulled in to the Whips office, one by one, to have their end of term reports read out to them. While some are being told "to try harder", others are attempting to come to terms with the stark reality of their real levels of activity being made known to local Labour Parties, who make up the selectorate in every constituency.

While Labour rebels will take pride in the number of times the whips have recorded a "No" vote against the Government, the real bone of contention amongst the perennially idle are the numbers of recorded "unauthorised absences" from parliamentary votes. Fortunately, however, there are no rules that lay down the number of unauthorised absences that Labour MPs may be allowed before the cosh is swung. Which is particularly good news for former Minister Harriet "Harpie" Harman who, while awaiting a Second Coming, finds little time to vote in the division lobbies. It is also good news for Deputy Chief Whip Keith Bradley, who recently managed the astonishing achievement of voting both in the "ayes" and the "noes" lobbies during the same division. Chief Whip, Ann Taylor, will also be preparing herself for a deluge of bleating letters from colleagues, claiming that various unauthorised absences are entirely down to the "pressure of work", "missed trains" and "sprained ankles".

WHILE John Prescott bleats that he now knows what it is like to be a hunted fox, Chancellor Gordon Brown gives every appearance of knowing what it is like to be a grinning Cheshire cat.

Last summer, the British economy hovered on the brink of a recession, whereas this summer under Gordie's firm stewardship, the economy is performing well. But Gordie's good fortune – he was virtually the only member of the Cabinet to escape any whispered reshuffle briefing – may not be unconnected with the fact that Britain did not go into the single currency in the first wave, as Captain Pantsdown was so keen on it doing. So if Sterling continues to outshine the Euro, and British growth rates continue to run ahead of Germany and France, that promised referendum on joining the Euro is likely to slip further and further down the timetable.

PETER Mandelson, denied rehabilitation in the reshuffle-that-wasn't, is still keeping busy. On 7th September he will be the keynote speaker at a two day conference in London on "Managing Knowledge and Measuring Intellectual Capital". Tickets are a snip at only £1,500 per head, a small price to pay for the knowledge organisers claim will be imparted.

Long-standing members of the Labour party will no doubt be rushing to learn from Mandy how to "Ensure all parts of the organisation are communicating and sharing knowledge". And the Britannia building society should certainly send a representative to learn the importance of "Accurate financial reporting". Geoffrey Robinson, a man who also has rather more time on his hands after last December's revelations, might want to pop down to hear what his old friend has to say about "improved investor relations".

WHEN TREVOR Phillips was invited to address the recent National Union of Students convention in Nottingham as an inspiring example of a former NUS president made good it was made clear the event was not political.

In his opening speech the present "New" Labour-leaning incumbent Andrew Pakes criticised leafleters from the Campaign for Free Education for trying to "politicise" the conference.

Pakes then passed the mike to Phillips, who announced that he would not give a campaign speech – before pontificating at length about the task that awaits the mayor of London. His attempts to get the audience on side included the promise of 24-hour licensing in the city.

But the earnest young things were not ready to be convinced. One delegate stood up and berated the speaker for concentrating on his mayoral bid, only to receive the stinging retort from Phillips that if she disagreed with what he had said she was obviously a Jeffrey Archer supporter.

O·B·N

She looked immaculate and absolutely gorgeous and oh, so thin, in a black and white striped business suit. 'Isn't Cherie lovely, and so friendly', breathed every spouse to her neighbour… She is really good at her job, she talks in a friendly normal voice, she's got three kids who look great and a handsome husband who happens to be the prime minister.

Linda McDougall on Cherie Blair, Sunday Times (Nominated by E Darkin)

£10 paid for all submissions put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

AIR ON A U-TURN

1987. Labour's bright young trade and industry spokesman, one Tony Blair, denounces privatisation as "the closest thing to legalised political corruption".

June 1994. The front-runner in Labour's leadership contest, Tony Blair, describes the Tory devotion to selling off state assets as "this insane notion".

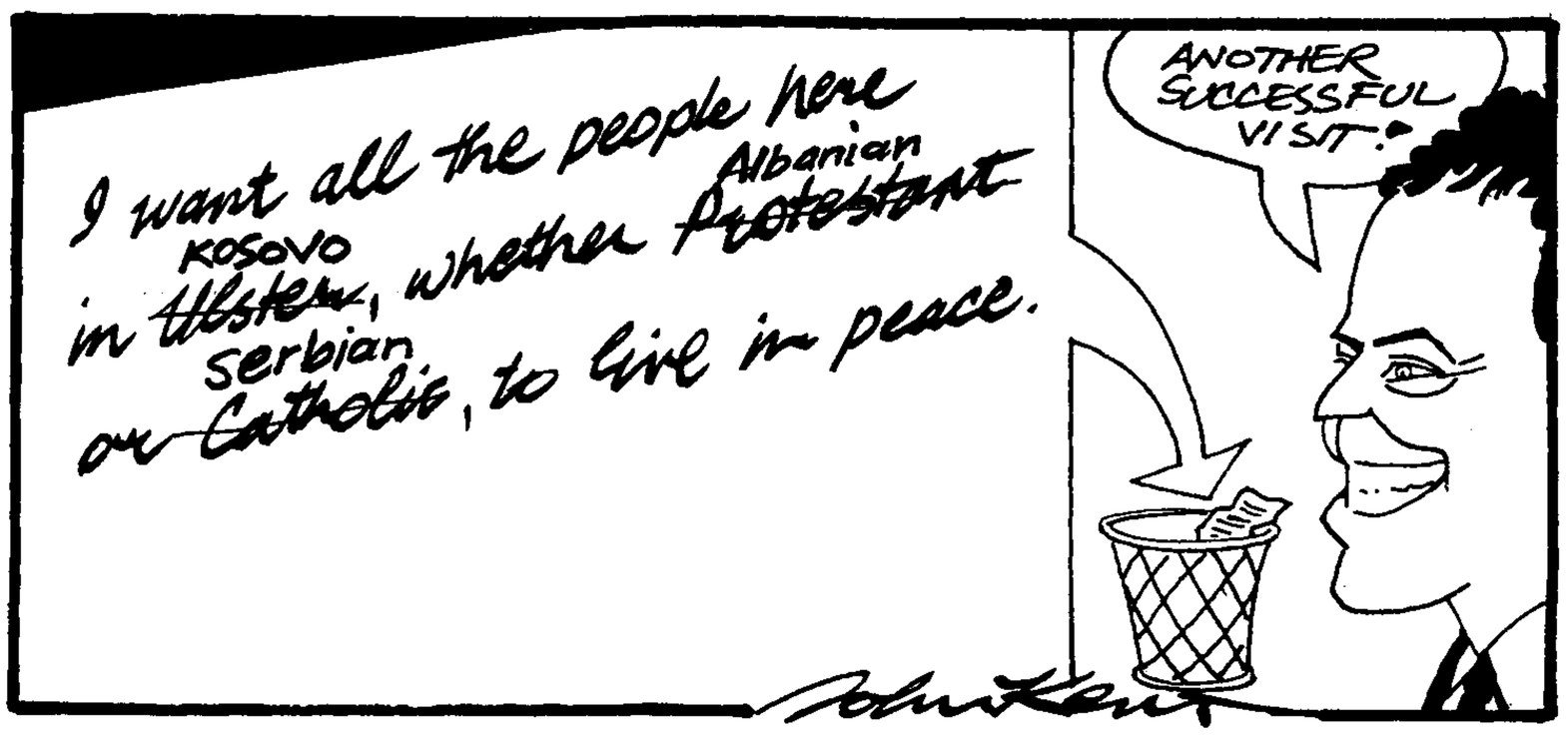
October 1996. "The Tories have dreamed up a crazy new scheme to privatise the air!" shadow transport secretary Andrew Smith tells the Labour conference. "They want to flog off the air traffic control service! Let me warn the transport secretary: Labour will do everything to block this sell-off. Our air is not for sale!" He returns to the theme in Parliament on 28 October, asking the transport secretary: "For once, will he take some notice of the public who are overwhelmingly opposed to privatisation of those [air traffic control] centres and see it as profoundly ill-judged dogma?"

February 1997. A letter from Andrew Smith's deputy, Keith Bradley, confirms that Labour is still ruling out privatisation of air traffic control. Two weeks later, however, shadow trade and industry minister Margaret Beckett tells BBC TV's *On The Record* that she "could not rule out" a Labour government pushing ahead with the sale.

March 1997. Another shadow cabinet member, Derek Foster, restates Labour's opposition to privatisation of civil and public services, including air traffic control. Joe Magee, national officer of the IPMS white-collar union, informs his members that "I have spoken to the shadow transport team and they confirm that Labour policy remains unchanged. There will be no privatisation of air traffic control."

April 1997. Labour admits that it will "look" at privatising air traffic control. Asked if this represents a U-turn, Margaret Beckett tells *Newsnight*: "No. We have always said we would look at these issues on their merits." On the *Today* programme, Gordon Brown is asked about Andrew Smith's famous conference speech. "He did say also he was prepared to consider this [sell-off] if, of course, the safety test in the public interest had been met," the shadow chancellor claims. In fact, Smith said no such thing – as Brown's spokesman later confesses.

July 1999. Tony Blair decides to go ahead with privatising air traffic control. To save embarrassment, he tries to conceal the news in a written answer on the day before MPs leave for the summer recess. But a furious Betty Boothroyd orders transport minister Helen Liddell to come to the House and make a proper announcement. Liddell is savaged by her own backbenchers; not a single Labour MP speaks in her defence. One day later, Blair shows his gratitude by demoting her to energy minister.


I want all the people here in Kosovo, whether Albanian or Serbian, Protestant or Catholic, to live in peace.
ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL VISIT.

"Oh no! The bells have turned Blairite!"

TELEPHONE canvassers have inundated Labour Party members in Southeast London with requests for votes. They are all trying to persuade local members to vote for on-message candidates to stand in elections to the new Greater London Assembly.

There are problems, however, including the small matter of ballot papers failing to arrive on time. Some of those lucky enough to have both a telephone and a ballot paper have been canvassed by an individual describing himself as "David Gardner" who urges comrades in Greenwich to vote for council leader Len Duvall. "Please vote for our Len," pleads Gardner with a south London nasal twang but without revealing that, in another role, he occupies the position of Assistant General Secretary of the Labour Party, and is supposed to be strictly impartial in any election.

PAISLEY PATTER

EACH time the *Eye* mentions the Rev. Ian Paisley's burgeoning on-line presence, the number of hits on his twin sites, religious and secular, soars.

On www.ianpaisley.org the big news is that the end of the world is nigh. Ever since the Treaty of Rome was signed, Paisley has been convinced that Ever Closer Union is a conspiracy secretly organised by the Bishop of Rome, who is (depending on your view) the Pope or the Antichrist.

Taking the latter position Ian – who topped the Ulster poll in June's euro-elections – ventured into the ugly new parliament building in Strasbourg for the first time, constantly on the look out for signs that Armageddon is imminent.

While most of his fellow MEPs noted the horrible architecture, bizarre layout and exorbitant cost, Paisley began examining the chairs. As he explains: "It is certainly a building of the Space Age. The seats of its massive hemisphere are designed like the crew seats in the Star Trek space machines. There are 679 of them – but wait for it! While these seats are allocated to members, one seat remains unallocated and unoccupied. The number of the seat is 666."

Just in case anyone's forgotten their Old Testament, Paisley turns to the *Book of Revelations*, 13:18. "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of The Beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six."

Spooky, and of course Paisley fully expects the seat to be filled by the Antichrist – just as soon as the Vatican gets its act together. "The Antichrist's *seat* will be occupied. The world awaits his full and final development. The Lord will destroy him by the spirit of His mouth and by the brightness of His coming (*Thessalonians*, 2:8). The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Meanwhile, Satan has been keeping busy by taking over the EU's logos and iconography. "First the sign which it chose as its symbol was the Woman riding the Beast. This comes from a prophecy in *Revelations*, 17.

"The depiction of the harlot woman was reproduced on the centenary stamp of the EU, in a huge painting in the Parliament's new building in Brussels, and by a huge sculpture outside the new Council of Ministers building... the Euro bears the same insignia.

"The Tower of Babel has been used on posters emanating from Europe – a truly suggestive prophetic sign. Now a massive Crystal Palace tower (officially called the Tower Building) houses the Fifth Parliament of Europe." Yes, it all fits.

NOOKS and CORNERS

CITIZENS of Beverley, that glorious town near Hull whose architectural treasures include the minster and St Mary's church, may have rejoiced at the disappearance of that preposterous fiction, Humberside, but now the town finds itself back in the East Riding of Yorkshire – and is by no means safe.

The civic society and others are up in arms because of a plan to sell the town's ancient cattle market and build a large supermarket on this prime site. This is the brainchild of Darryl Stephenson, the political whiz-kid from Labour-dominated Hull who is now the county's chief executive officer (and whose wife happens to be the head of the county's legal department). As the East Riding has a hung council, Mr Stephenson is able to wield great power, and as the council is very short of cash to pay wages, selling off a big asset seems a good idea. Never mind that Beverley already has four supermarkets and that another on the cattle market site can only damage the shops in the town centre as well as making traffic congestion even worse: money is what matters.

So the land was sold to Messrs Tesco at an auction behind closed doors and six planning applications are now pending. All this provoked opposition and a public demonstration which obliged the council to refuse detailed planning permission to allow the planning issues to be resolved at a public inquiry in the autumn. But what if planning permission is eventually refused for the site? The civic society is worried that compensation might then have to be paid if the cattle market was sold with the promise of full permission. All that would be revealed in the land deal contract, but the chief exec is strangely reluctant to let anyone see this document. Indeed, he has ordered the tame councillors not to discuss the matter. I wonder why.

Not for the first time Beverley is being defended by a few responsible citizens – remember the "Beverley Three" who were so wickedly stung with massive financial costs for opposing the building of houses on the open glebe land south of the minster [*Eyes passim*]?

But questions of liberty, let alone aesthetics, seem to be of little concern to highly paid chief executive officers.

BUXTON, Derbyshire's Cheltenham, the Baden-Baden of the Peak District, is enjoying the input of huge sums of public money to restore the long neglected Crescent, that magnificent Georgian pile by Carr of York.

But this, of course, does not make the local politicians look after any other old buildings that might make the place worth visiting. There is the case of the former Unitarian Church with its associated school and manse in St James's Terrace built in 1874-75, a carefully designed group of gothic revival buildings by Thomas Worthington, the architect responsible for the Albert Memorial in front of Manchester town hall.

Although unlisted, all three buildings lie within a conservation area; all three are in reasonable condition and the church has been used as a dance studio ever since it closed as a place of worship in 1968. Yet Buxton borough council has just renewed the permission it graciously granted to demolish church and school in favour of a block of flats. When this proposal was first made, it was rejected on the grounds of "over development" but was given permission in 1990. Since then, 24 new dwellings have been built nearby. The latest proposal has somehow acquired two more storeys, yet the council has discreetly renewed the planning permission. Why?

GLASGOW is currently basking in the status of the arts council's "UK city of architecture and design", where an exhibition about that local hero, Alexander "Greek" Thomson, is attracting much interest.

So the city council has chosen this sensitive moment to grant listed building consent for the demolition of an early 19th century building on the corner of Wellington Street and West Regent Street which was cleverly enlarged by Thomson and in which the great architect had his office. The building has long been derelict and there is a case for a new building on the site which retains Thomson's doorcases and the elegant facade in West Regent Street which forms part of an harmonious streetscape. Yet the council has gone and given planning permission for a nasty design by Cooper Cromar architects which is far too tall and which has been condemned by the Royal fine art commission for Scotland as "insensitive both to what remains on the site and to what the site demands" while the placing of a modish glass canopy in front of the one Thomson stone doorcase it is proposed to retain has been described by the commission as an "insult". Such is civic pride.

'Piloti'

ON THE GRAVY TRAIN

OUR HEARTS must bleed for all those poor ex-MEPs whose snouts, as the bell tolled midnight on 19 July, were at last forcibly prized away from the trough which has yielded them so many goodies, from worldwide freebies to their £197-a-day "attendance" allowances just for clocking in at Strasbourg or Brussels to collect the cheque.

But let it never be said Brussels does not look after its own. Step up Mr Tom Spencer, onetime MEP for Surrey. Last January, it will be recalled, Mr Spencer was blazoned all over the tabloids when he was caught coming through customs at Heathrow, clutching an assortment of cannabis, cocaine and pornographic magazines acquired while spending the weekend in Amsterdam with his HIV-positive gay lover. Had he not been chairman of the European Parliament's committee on "foreign affairs" (geddit?), no doubt those customs men might have been tempted to haul this distinguished champion of a federal Europe before the courts.

As it was, after embarrassing exchanges, Mr Spencer was waved on his way. We were then treated to several days of sickly protestations about how he and his wife Liz had come to a really civilised "understanding" about his homosexuality, throughout their 19-year marriage. The only belated slap on the wrist he received was the Tories' decision to axe him from the number three slot on their party list of candidates for Euro-region south-east, which meant that, post 10 June, Mr Spencer would have to begin looking for another job.

A less hardy soul might have opted for instant resignation, to save what remains of his party's good name, and scuttled off beneath the nearest stone. But so at home was Mr Spencer with all the good things of Brussels and Strasbourg life that he decided bravely to battle on to the last. Weeks after the new batch of MEPs had been elected, he was not only still drawing his Parliamentary wages and expenses, but right up to mid-July was still being feted at a conference in Helsinki in his role as chairman of the foreign affairs committee.

Finally on 19 July, the rules harshly insisted, he had to step down and retire, laden down with pension rights and other pay-offs to ensure he could spend his remaining years in at least a shadow of the style to which had become accustomed. But, before a tear of sympathy trickles down our cheeks, what is this? Not for nothing has Mr Spencer loyally served his term as a member of the finest club in Europe. A whole new career now beckons, even more lucratively rewarded than that just brought so cruelly to an end.

It is announced that Mr Spencer is to go to Oxford University, as executive director of the European centre for public affairs at Templeton College. This august academic institution is named after the billionaire Sir John Templeton, who has devoted much of his fortune to promoting religion and the spiritual life. How pleased Sir John must be by his latest disciple, who has set such an inspiring moral example to all those students who will sit respectfully at his feet to imbibe the mysteries of Euro-federalism. But at least not all the new director's salary will come from the bequests of the godly philanthropist. The centre can also count on a generous subvention of taxpayers' money from Brussels, in return for its good work in evangelising for the more secular religion centred on "Europe". Not to mention, of course, its sacred gravy train.

'Backbiter'

EYE TV

The State Of The Industry (All channels)

IN the hit American novel *Turn Of The Century*, writer Kurt Anderson suggests at one point that political divisions in American society — Democrat, Republican, Independent — have now been replaced by affiliations to television shows. It has become more revealing to say that Americans belong to the constituency which watches *Friends* or *Jerry Springer* or *The Larry Sanders Show*, divisions which are precise and demographic.

In a similar way, television has become in Britain a way in which public figures define themselves. Carol Vorderman has announced her intention of campaigning against sex and violence on the screen. It's a smart move, targeting problems which do not arise in her own genre, while taking on an air of seriousness which she is unlikely to gain from the programmes she makes.

And Peter Mandelson, so cruelly disappointed in the recent reshufflette, has used television to suggest that he is a man of the future. Having reinvented the mortgage system so impressively, the MP for Hartlepool has been thinking about television in the 20th century. In a speech last week, Mandy floated the idea of two licence fees. Viewers would pay a "top up" of around £30 a year to receive BBC Digital services. Staying true to the tradition that things said by Mandy are always hints of something about to be said by someone else, this turns out to be "close to the thinking" of the government committee on the future of broadcasting. The committee is also expected to recommend that BBC Resources (the technical division of the Corporation) should be sold off.

As always, these ideas are presented as a boon to the viewers rather than the fulfilment of the obsessions of bureaucrats. The most powerful case for the licence fee has always been that it provides a universal service (two TV channels, five radio, local radio) for a one-off payment. Internal and external resentment has been caused towards the corporation by the Birtist decision to spend money on services (BBC World, News 24 etc) which the majority audience is unable to see. The sense that the rich would be getting a better BBC surely undermines the case for the universal fee.

The BBC uses the word "complementary" for the digital service but there will surely be an inevitable temptation to shunt

"What does that say?"

onto subscription the middle-class shows with low audiences: history, arts, art house movies. This is commercially logical but would result in public-service programmes no longer being generally available, thereby removing the main justification for the licence fee.

Equally dubious is the selling off of Resources. Even ignoring the economic rule that partial privatisations are almost inevitably a prelude to total privatisations, it seems likely that the corporation will end up hiring its technical staff as freelances at inflated fees, as happened with production and on-screen talent after the requirement to commission more from independent houses.

Usefully, at the same time as Mandy's Brave New World speech, important evidence is emerging about the consequences for viewers of the last great television revolution. Last week, the courts upheld the legality of BskyB's exclusive deal to cover live Premiership football. Although it leads to "restrictions for the public's viewing of football", the "disadvantages were outweighed by the benefits".

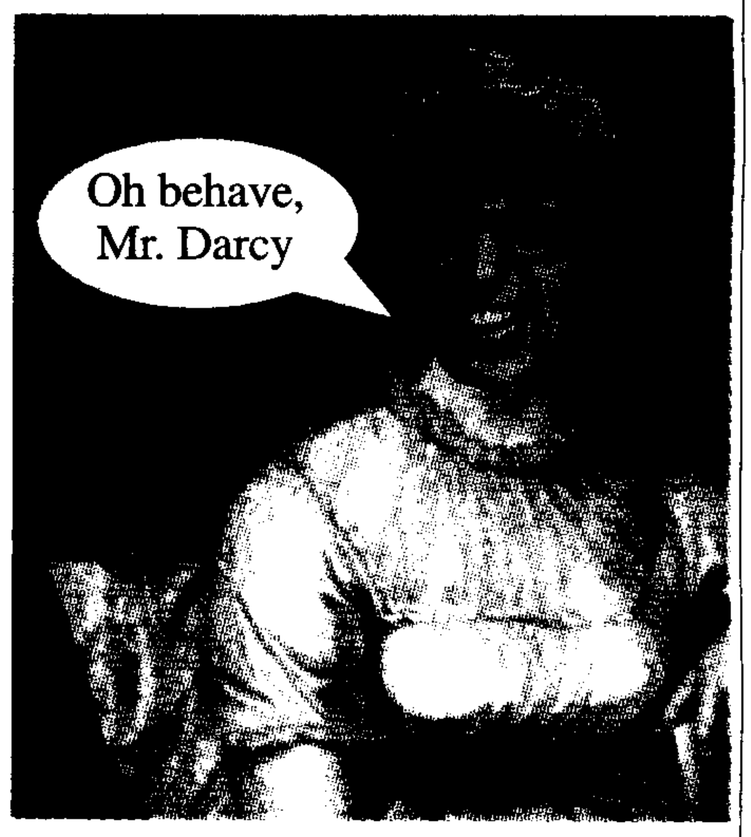
Well, balls, frankly. In the inevitable way of a slow-moving legal system, this ruling comes at a time when the real problem for football fans has gone beyond BSkyB's ownership of Premier League matches. Footie obsessives have just been sent details of their potential bills for next season. The great fear of recent years had been that big matches would be switched to subscription, as has happened with boxing bouts. Sky had promised that they wouldn't and they haven't — but they've found another way of achieving the same effect. Many important England and domestic European matches will now be on Sky Digital, while others have been signed by the rival OnDigital. So the cost of a whole season's football is now approaching an armful of licence fees.

It's important to make this point because the Mandys of the time sold the deregulation of television as something which would be not only better for the viewer but more economical. In fact, the whole television revolution has achieved an opposite effect in terms of costs. The rise of independent producers was supposed to drive down production costs but what happens now is that successful companies hold broadcasters to ransom over hit shows. The spread of satellite and digital channels was predicted to reduce costs to the viewer and yet the goggle-eyed now need a whole portfolio of subscriptions. Now we face two separate BBC licence fees. Both artistically and financially, television viewing in Britain is becoming a matter of counting the cost.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Jane Austen Powers

MEDIA NEWS

IS the *Sun* TV critic Garry Bushell heading for a mid-life crisis? The first warning signs appeared when he ditched his wife and three children, after 22 years of marriage, to shack up with Tania Ashbee, a gormless peroxide blonde young enough to be his daughter. Now the fat gorilla has reformed his rock band from the 1970s, the Gonads, and released a new album.

Readers of his *Sun* column will recognise several Bushell obsessions, such as Jo Brand ("Grown men cry when she drops her kecks,/Her doctor sent her to the vets"), Ben Elton ("Ugly as sin with that rictus grin/You're just a know-nothing, no-talent non-entity") and our beloved Prime Minister ("Tony Blair with yer ugly wife, with her elephant ankles, you've ruined my life."). There is also the obligatory reference to Grant Mitchell of *EastEnders*. ("He shagged Sharon and Michelle/He might kiss but he won't tell/Even Tiffany started to swell/When she saw the size of his...FUCKING HELL!")

Rather more alarming, for those who fear that Garry is seeking to recover his long-lost youth, is the ceaseless sexual boasting. "Till I ate your mum I never knew how wet a fanny gets,/Man, I'm drowning here, tell me is the coastguard coming yet?" he roars on a song called Beano. "Why do you scream in fear, I've only got a package here/It won't fit in the front so shall I stick it in the rear?"

A Doctor writes: These are indeed classic symptoms of a man desperate to prove that he can still get it up. The album's title, *Back and Barking*, appears to be a reference to the patient's mental state. If the condition persists, a course of Viagra may be necessary.

"THE BBC does not put licence fee income at risk in any commercial venture," says the Beeb's most recent annual report. Bollocks. The BBC has been toying with the idea of selling various assets to the private sector since 1996.

And if the proposal to privatise BBC Resources made by Gavin Davies and his "influential government committee" is successful, the Beeb will be able to go ahead and flog off all its studios, outside broadcasting units, cameras, edit facilities, in fact just about every remaining piece of kit that the licence-payer has generously provided. All to raise yet more money for its unwatched digital channels.

When this latest news that privatisation was again on the agenda broke, nobody from the Beeb could be found to provide a single objection to it, let alone mount a defence of public service responsibilities. Unusual and rather telling when you consider the speed with which managers have come forward in the past.

Take the new head of Resources, Margaret Salmon, for example. Her appointment was immediately hailed by the technician's union BECTU "because of her promise that the BBC would never be privatised" (*The Stage*, 24/6). She has yet to comment on the committee's proposals.

Even "Bonking" Rod Lynch, the reviled suit whom she replaced, managed to consistently deny privatising the directorate even as he turned it into a limited company. And let's not forget his use of licence-payer's revenue to bid for private contracts such as the "brand awareness for Welsh lamb and beef," of which he boasted "this deal is another example of BBC Resources programme-making skills translating effectively to the world of commerce" (*Evening Standard* 10/2).

As for John Birt's view? "It is not true... nobody at a senior level at the BBC has proposed privatisation," he told Radio 4's *Today* programme. "It is simply not on the agenda" (30/8/96). Well, it is now. No comment from him either this time, let alone from Dyke.

Of course, one item for the committee to consider is how unattractive Resources might be to potential bidders. After all it has never worked as a "limited company" within Birt's internal market. So successful was it in its first year that it made a hearty £10m loss and is still in debt to the tune of £4m. Indeed, in spite of its heavy marketing drive, so far it has only managed to drum up £30m of business outside the BBC.

I-Sky

Millions of people across the world logged on to the Net yesterday to salute tragic John F. Kennedy. In America tributes poured in ...In the UK, **CurrantBun.com** and Sky News – at **www.skynews.co.uk** – led the way.

The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Kevin Jenner

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

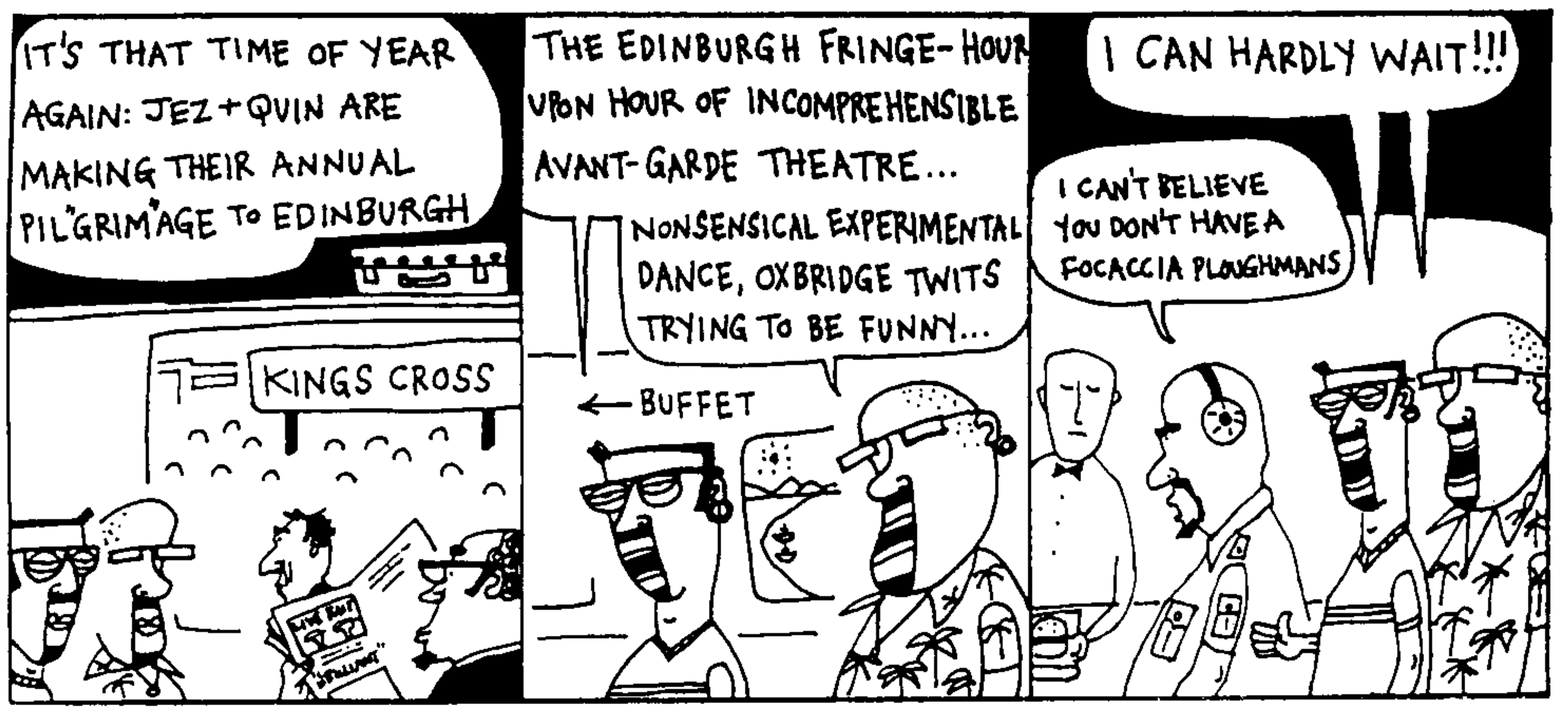
SEX and *Test Match Special* don't usually go together, but they made an unscripted coupling during the recent test match at Edgbaston.

As play neared its end on the second day two lager-fuelled chaps seated themselves in front of a crowd-effects microphone and began a loud conversation. Jonathan Agnew apologised for their intrusion and a minion was dispatched to ask them to move.

Presumably unaware that they were broadcasting to the nation the anonymous voices discussed the value-for-money they'd enjoyed during a lunchtime excursion to Cheddar Road. A five minute walk from the Birmingham ground, Cheddar Road is the local red-light district which police once proposed licensing as a brothel. It does a roaring trade during international matches.

But as their revelations became interesting – and we know each man paid £25 – producer Peter Baxter ordered the effects microphone to be silenced. Strangely, the cricket wasn't half as interesting after that.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON – UP NORTH KNIFE & PACKER


IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN: JEZ + QUIN ARE MAKING THEIR ANNUAL PIL'GRIM'AGE TO EDINBURGH
KINGS CROSS
THE EDINBURGH FRINGE- HOUR UPON HOUR OF INCOMPREHENSIBLE AVANT-GARDE THEATRE...
NONSENSICAL EXPERIMENTAL DANCE, OXBRIDGE TWITS TRYING TO BE FUNNY...
← BUFFET
I CAN HARDLY WAIT!!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DON'T HAVE A FOCACCIA PLOUGHMANS

OH, YEAH? A NEW COLUMN OF AMAZING FACTS

"Harry Lloyd, playing David [Copperfield]'s young schoolfriend Steerforth, was spotted by BBC scouts in a school play at Eton and chosen for the role before they were aware of his literary ancestry – he is the great-great-grandson of Dickens himself."

– *Evening Standard*, 28 July

YET AGAIN there's controversy over a Channel 4 "documentary" on Northern Ireland. This time round the headmaster of Catholic school has complained about "the slant and inaccuracies" in an edition of the weekly Transworld Sport show on 24 July.

St Malachy's college was described on air as being located in a Protestant area of Belfast, which resulted in its students being attacked by Protestant youths whilst out training. In fact, as Fr Donal McKeown points out in a far too polite letter to C4 supremo Michael Jackson, his school is situated on the junction of the Antrim and Crumlin Roads. In those circumstances it took a truly amazing choice of camera angles to completely eliminate the high rise New Lodge flats complex opposite, replete with Irish tricolours and Republican murals.

Over the past three decades, precisely none of the school's pupils have been attacked whilst training. Indeed St Malachy's has one of the best reputations of any school in Ulster, where the 11-plus still exists.

What seems to have happened here is that the programme's producers heard about St Malachy's success in athletics. As well as competing with distinction and absolutely no hassle in (religiously mixed) local events, the school has sent teams to America which have managed to win the US high school championships for three years in succession.

This resulted in unsolicited and unwelcome articles in the Irish-American press which portrayed the students as heroic combatants against British imperialism, bravely running their way past Orange death squads on the way to their ghetto school. The Transworld researchers seem to have taken such cuttings at face value and prepared a script highlighting St Malachy's battle against oppression. And when they stepped off the shuttle from London to discover that the Irish-American stuff was total balls, decided to film the programme as planned, regardless of the facts.

As Fr McKeown writes: "Instead of just celebrating a sporting success, it seemed to portray the boys as poor, down-trodden Catholics who, despite terrible sectarian odds, succeeded. This distorted picture has done no favours to the school and its relationship to the wider community in this delicate period."

Leatherhead Golf Club
has a vacancy for
Brassiere Assistant

Advertisement (Richmond Borough Guardian)

TELEPHONE SALES

THE TELEPHONE Preference Service (TPS) won a contract with Oftel to enforce new legislation on 1 May giving people the right to be placed on a register to opt out from receiving direct selling calls.

Since then they have been inundated with calls from people who are sick of answering the phone in the middle of dinner only to find themselves speaking to Darren from Warrington trying to flog them double glazing or a new kitchen.

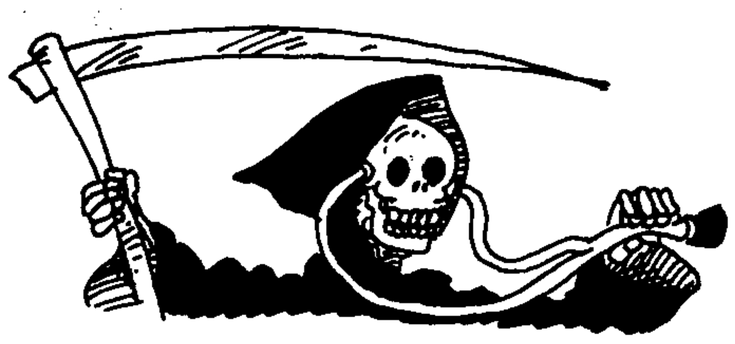
This has led to a backlog in handling complaints from those who have already signed up, which TPS claims will be dealt with very shortly.

In the meantime companies are breaking the law by contacting numbers on the register and getting away with it. One customer received a letter from TPS on 11 May informing him that within 28 days his name would be removed from the lists circulated to the pesky salesmen and it would henceforth be illegal for companies to make unsolicited sales calls to his home.

On 15 June, however, he had a call from a direct selling firm in Peterborough, and another on 2 July. He complained to TPS on both occasions but received no reply. In desperation he contacted his local MP Malcolm Moss, who wrote again to TPS on his behalf. In the meantime on 19 July... yup, another direct sales call from Manchester asking if he needed a new kitchen.

If TPS is to live up to its own promise that it is "Giving the customer trust and confidence in its direct marketing" it could make a start by improving its own customer relations.

AH, EDINBURGH AT FESTIVAL TIME... A COSMOPOLITAN MELTING POT... A CHANCE TO MEET NEW PEOPLE...
FROM EVERY CULTURE, CREED, RACE AND LIFESTYLE CHOICE
RING RING RING
POPPY, THANK GOD YOU'VE ARRIVED - WE DON'T KNOW ANYBODY!
THE REST OF THE ISLINGTON POSSE ARE STUCK AT DARLINGTON!
BARMAN! GET ME LATTÉ!



DOING THE ROUNDS

Child heart surgery

ON June 3 1999, MD received the following allegations about child heart surgery at London's Royal Brompton hospital from an anonymous "concerned professional", together with confidential audit data for babies and children with Down's Syndrome undergoing heart surgery.

A number of unsubstantiated and unverified allegations were made about the attitudes of some members of staff towards children with Down's Syndrome, the surgical outcomes for such children, the fact that parents aren't necessarily given the true success rates for surgery and that the unit in general has staffing and morale problems.

On June 4, MD faxed the information in confidence to Mark Taylor, chief executive of the trust, asking for his assurance that the allegations would be looked into as a matter of urgency. He responded immediately by setting up an inquiry and appointing an external assessor, Dr Stewart Hunter from Newcastle.

When it was discovered that Dr Hunter was due on holiday in August, a second assessor, Mike Godman from Edinburgh, was appointed. MD also sent urgent letters to Barry Jackson, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and Donald Irvine, President of the General Medical Council, to ask if they would wish to know the identity of the Trust at this stage. Mr Jackson also responded immediately and the information was passed on to him.

After 56 days, MD has yet to receive a response from Sir Donald Irvine.

MD has spoken to doctors at the trust, both junior and senior, and also to Down's Syndrome Association, which was also sent the anonymous letter and is itself preparing information for the investigation. The letter was also sent to Brian Langstaff QC, who heads the legal team for the Bristol Inquiry. The Inquiry also sent the letter back to the Royal Brompton, stating that they were unable to act on anonymous evidence.

None of the doctors MD has spoken to believe the allegations of poor surgical performance, although the language of at least one of the surgeons was described as "harsh" at times. The Trust has a clear "Speaking Up" policy for internal whistle-blowing and the Public Disclosure Act now provides legal protection for anyone who blows the whistle in good faith.

Despite this, the person making the allegations does not feel confident to own up to them, even to MD.

The audit data that was sent with the letter is very rough, and represents the early stages of an audit within the hospital looking at babies with and without Down's Syndrome undergoing surgery for atrio-ventricular defects (holes between the chambers of the heart). The data has not been statistically verified but as one consultant cardiologist put it: "I think the figures are good and will be made available shortly."

MD has not been able to uncover any other information to support the allegations (a clear difference from the Bristol situation in 1992). The Trust did act promptly, but part of the delay in reporting may be due the difficulty many Trusts have in accessing audit information. In Eye last, MD exposed the fact that 30% of heart surgery units did not even contribute to the latest general audit. The Royal Brompton was not one of these, but specific information about individual operations is much harder to come by.

The data sent to the Eye was not "routine audit" but the early work of a junior doctor's research project. If Trusts are to quickly rebuff unfair allegations, they need to put more time and resources into audit.

Ironically, the Royal Brompton holds some of the most rigorous audit meetings in the UK. Every single child who dies or suffers brain damage as a result of heart surgery is discussed fully and meetings open to all the staff on the unit, and, given what happened in Bristol, it is hopefully unlikely that poor results would remain hidden for long. There may well have been failures of communication, and crass and insensitive remarks made to parents, but the Trust itself offers surgery to more Down's syndrome children than most other UK hospital and treats many children who have been refused treatment, or had unsuccessful surgery elsewhere. However, it is now two months since the Eye asked for an inquiry, so where are the results?

M.D.

SIGNAL FAILURES

Squeezing the Tube at both ends

GLENDA Jackson, whose departure from the DETR was held by most to be a direct result of her making a pig's ear of public transport in London, will now be running for Mayor, a post that would give her responsibility for, er, transport in London. But what sort of tube system will she preside over should she take to the mayoral throne next year?

As we reported in Eye 979, Railtrack, dubious safety record and all, are front runners to take over the sub-surface lines as part of the much-vaunted "Public Private Partnership". This will in theory involve the creation of through rail services in the capital – which are likely to be based on the model of BAA's Heathrow Express (Travelcards not valid, tickets £20 return, trip lasting a total of 15 minutes). How would this mooted "integration" take place?

A worryingly large number of Londoners have recently been drafted in to focus groups and asked to give their opinion of a tube map *sans* the familiar yellow of the Circle line. It seems that permanent closure of the line to ordinary tube travellers, who would be left to watch fast-trackers zoom past them on special tickets, could well be on the cards. The current temporary closure of the Circle line for "essential engineering works" has led to chaos throughout the tube system – and an increasingly hostile London-based press – during the summer months. Londoners, it seems, might as well get used to it. One transport campaigner told the Eye: "Railtrack is quite ruthless and if they could close anything and say it was in the public interest, they would. I think it is highly probable that they're playing that game."

Exclusive talks between Railtrack, the DETR, and London Transport are not scheduled to conclude until early next year. But it already looks like a done deal. Other potential bidding consortia are privately furious, because they will lose the opportunity to bid for one third of the network, worth just under £3bn. Worse still, tenders for the remaining deep-tube lines will cost around £10m each to prepare, but there is not even a guarantee that contracts will definitely be awarded. John Prescott has said the project could be scrapped should bids received not constitute value for money. With bidders such as Bechtel (previous experience: the disastrously over budget, over time and not-over-by-new-year Jubilee Line) and Balfour Beatty (the collapsed Heathrow tunnel) in the frame, it is not difficult to see why the Transport supremo might require a get-out clause.

● **THERE must be some red faces at BT, which recently heaped praise on the national rail enquiries service (NRES) and even gave it an award for "exceeding its key targets".**

A few weeks later the new rail regulator, Tom Winsor, gave a slightly different view. "The service has come within a whisker of incurring a heavy penalty," he said. "I am not prepared to accept statistics adjusted to accommodate some hazy theory that callers who persist for less than half a minute may have changed their mind or called a wrong number."

What had upset him was an audit by his staff which discovered the Association of Train Operating Companies had been fiddling the figures. Callers who gave up after waiting for less than 30 seconds were not included in the statistics for calls not answered.

There are several reasons why the lines are so busy. One is that NRES was franchised to the lowest bidders, rather than the ones promising the highest quality, so experienced ex-British Rail staff were replaced by newcomers on low wages. Some have only a hazy idea of British geography, let alone the meanderings of the rail network, but are expected to give accurate advice to any caller switched through from any part of the country.

Another problem is that Virgin and other operators keep bringing more mind-boggling complications into the fares system. Under BR the fares were just about simple enough for regular passengers to understand.

Today the variety of tickets and restrictions on validity is so great that even frequent travellers may feel compelled to ring NRES for guidance and interpretation. A simple enquiry for the return fare from Birmingham to London can take several minutes to answer if the caller is told of all the conditions attached to each type of ticket, and even longer if the call is handled by someone who has never tackled that particular conundrum before.

Changes to the Great Britain timetable book, produced by Railtrack, may also add to the pressure on NRES. In the early 1990s a copy cost £4.50;now it costs £9. BR used to hand out free copies to libraries; now Railtrack sells them at £8 each to the train operators and some public libraries have been told they must now pay for their copies. While Railtrack clocks up £1.2m profit every day, some local authorities may have to choose between rail timetables in libraries or upping the price of school dinners or home helps. A copy in every library, updated twice a year, could cost larger councils dearly. Not surprisingly, some are telling the rail industry where it can put its timetables.

● **SHOULD ONE of the guards boil a kettle for a cuppa the entire Tottenham Court Road underground station would probably come to a halt.**

The descent into the inferno has been made that little bit more unpleasant this summer by broken-down escalators. One has not functioned since May 1998 because London Underground lacks sufficient funds for the major structural repairs necessary. The other ground to a halt a few weeks ago owing to "a problem with the power supply".

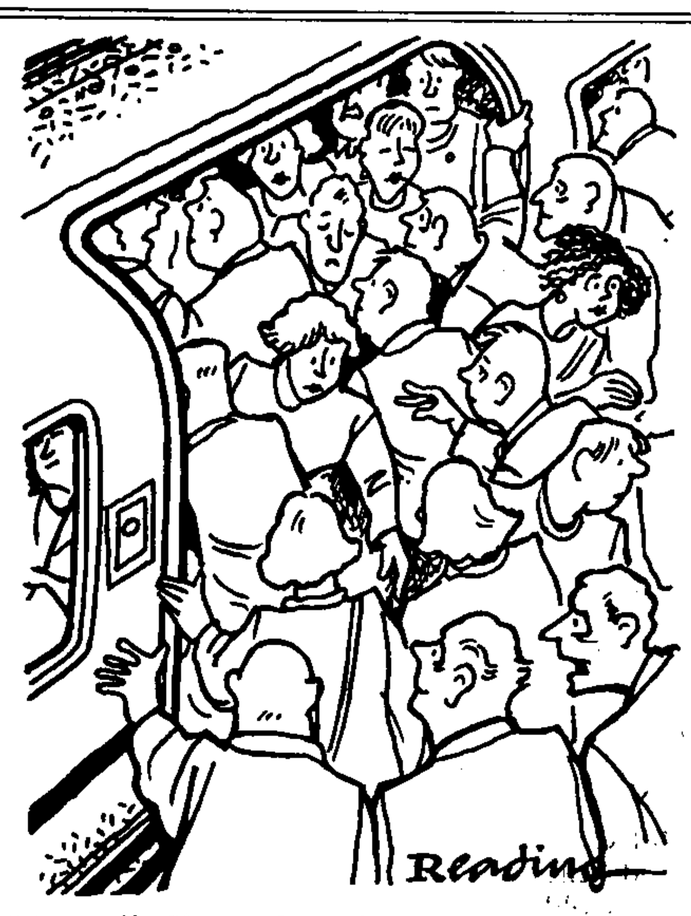
The new trains on the Northern Line (whose claim to decent air conditioning would be contested by any regular traveller) are taking up so much power, apparently, that there is not enough left to run the escalators.

● ***EYE* READER Stevan Walton recently bucked the trend among passengers on Virgin trains by having an entirely satisfactory journey from Manchester to London.**

So pleased was he with his experience that he contacted Virgin via their website to offer his congratulations, complimenting them on the early running of their train, the courtesy of staff, and the superior standard of service compared to that of GNER.

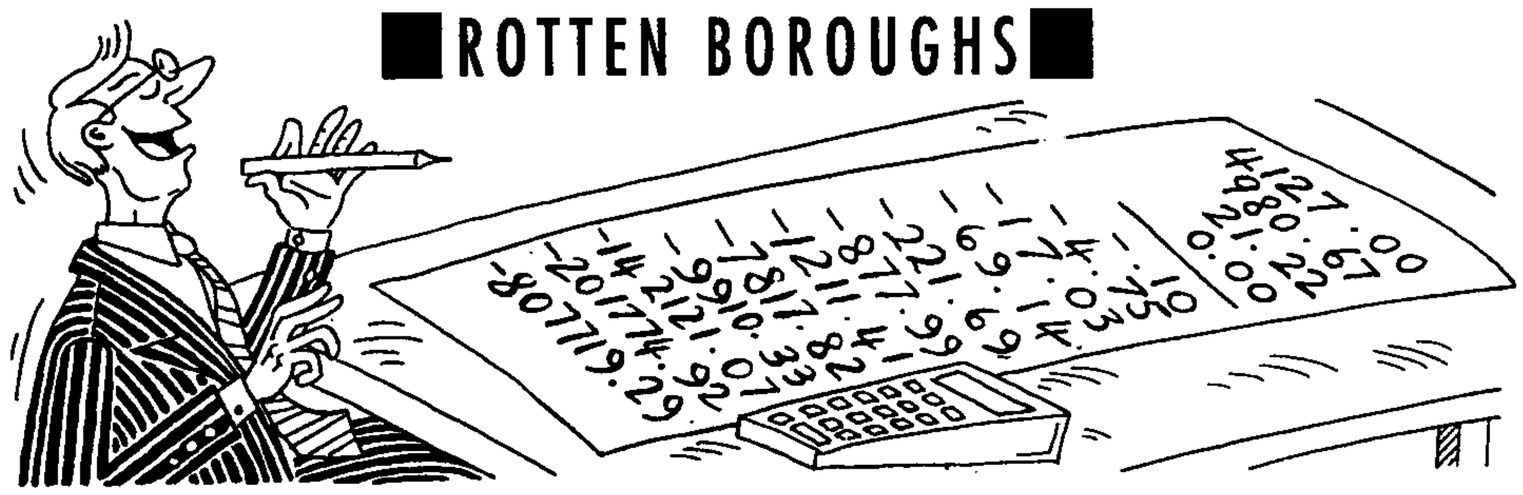
Since then he has received two letters – of apology – from Virgin, one of which asked him to send in his ticket so that they could refund the cost of his journey.

'Dr B. Ching'



"Actually I'm rather glad that John Prescott doesn't use the tube"

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



PAY 'N' DISMAY

CORRUPTION is rife in Lambeth's parking services, with disabled badges available on the black market for £20, traffic wardens taking bribes not to issue tickets and money from parking meters regularly going missing.

A secret report by auditors Price Waterhouse Coopers reveals overwhelming incompetence by council contractor Drakes. Parking is such a shambles in the borough that neither the council nor its contractor has any idea how many meters there are. Illegal parking is a breeze in the area around Brixton market and Atlantic Road, considered a "no-go" area by wardens, while one garage owner "is reputed to dissuade parking attendants with the aid of a firearm".

Drakes have been told by Lambeth that their contract will be terminated if they do not get their act together. The contractor has agreed to make a "good faith" payment of £450,000 to the council to "reflect variances from expected service levels" during 1998-99. This is getting off lightly, given that the expected income from street parking for the same period was £12.5m and the actual income was £5.3m. Much of the £7m shortfall is down to 100,000 unpaid parking tickets and 84,000 unissued warrants, but records are so poor that money collected from parking meters and pay-and-display machines is not properly accounted for, with the result that, er, "the council may not be receiving all the income to which it is entitled".

The blame does not all fall on Drakes. Lambeth is taken to task for "serious weaknesses" in the management of its parking contract, with little effective monitoring of performance.

● **MEANWHILE, in Manchester, Lib Dem councillor Yasmin Zalzala was so outraged to receive a parking ticket that she issued an angry press release. "Imagine my surprise when I got a ticket for parking in the city centre on a single yellow line last Saturday afternoon 16 minutes before the free period!" she wrote. "I only went because I feel we should support our city centres." Presumably Ms Zalzala will now campaign for Lambeth-style application of parking restrictions – especially for councillors.**

GOT CARTER

THE most expensive councillor on Britain's most expensive council has received an unexpected political setback from his closest colleagues. John Carter, Nottinghamshire county council's chair of finance, has been kicked off the local executive of the Co-op party in a secret ballot. In July it was revealed that Notts councillors drew an average of £8,964 last year in expenses and allowances – more than in any other county council. Councillors in neighbouring Lincolnshire, for example, claimed an average £2,557 and in Leicestershire £3,610. Carter's own exes, however, added up to a magnificent £32,600, including £10,666 for travel and more than £1,000 for phone calls. The grand total was £5,500 more than that claimed by Notts council leader Sir Dennis Pettitt – himself Britain's highest-paid county council leader. So now the search is on: does *any* other councillor in Britain claim higher exes than John Carter?

MUCK AND BRASS

ANOTHER triumph for Leeds city council, led by dynamic Labour supremo Brian "Sleep" Walker. It sold the city's College of Music some land next door to the West Yorkshire Playhouse at a knockdown price to build new college buildings, with an extra plot thrown in for the construction of a large concert hall which would benefit the city. Fair enough. But the college sold its old formerly council-owned site in a prime spot to private developer Rushbond for the ridiculously small sum of £200,000. Rushbond subsequently sold on the site for a sum not unadjacent to £2m, and it is now the site of a megapub.

Not a great deal for the council taxpayers, but at least they would get a new concert hall. Not quite. The college has decided *not* to build a public concert hall next to its new site, after all. Instead it has cut a deal with, er, Rushbond, which plans to develop the site as new BBC studios which will incorporate a small concert space – complying with the letter, but not the spirit, of the original deal.

BBC staff are lukewarm about all this, as they face the prospect of being shoe-horned into a site that will have no canteen, no parking and not enough desks for current staff. Sackings all round!

REEKING HAVOC

ISLE OF WIGHT councillors have rushed to support their colleague Colin Boswell, a millionaire garlic farmer who pleaded guilty at Portsmouth magistrates court last month (July) to 11 charges of using illegal chemicals on his crops. The court heard that Boswell, whose £8.5m business exported garlic all over Europe and at one time supplied sweetcorn to Tesco, had shown a "cynical disregard" for the safety of his workers, customers and neighbours. In one case an entire crop of maize keeled over after being dosed with a pesticide banned in the UK. As the instructions were in German, Boswell's operators had taken "an educated guess" on how much to use.

Boswell, an Independent member of IoW council, was known as the island's "greenest farmer" until his merry way with pesticides was exposed. He will be sentenced on 13 August. His friends at county hall are sticking by him, however, including Lib Dem council leader Marc Morgan Huws and his Independent deputy, Harry Rees. After Boswell's conviction council chair Barbara Foster, another Independent, said: "There but for the grace of God go I." Locals are wondering what on earth she means. Is the island really run by a bunch of would-be mass poisoners?

DOUBLE NEGATIVE

HACKNEY council's equal opportunities policy (EOP) states that job applicants will not be discriminated against if they are HIV positive. One job-seeker hired solicitors to ask if he had not made the short list for a concierge job because he had stated on his application form that he was HIV positive. Back came the response from Hackney legal services: "Your client was not short-listed because he stated he has a progressive condition, namely HIV." After his solicitors pointed out that this flew in the face of the EOP, Hackney decided to pay the man £2,000 to hush up the matter, whilst claiming that a typo had occurred and the letter should have read: "Your client was not short listed *not* because he stated he has a progressive condition, namely HIV". Smooth operators, these lawyers.

● **EALING Labour councillor Gurcharan Singh is very keen to be selected as a candidate for the new Greater London Assembly (GLA) seat of Hillingdon and Ealing. "I am passionate about London," he says in a glossy handout promoting his bid, in which he vows to "support cultural diversity" and promote inter-community harmony. The "passionate" bit, at least, is right. When Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated in November 1984 Singh told the *Southall Gazette*: "Violence breeds violence. She has been dealt with in accordance with the Sikh religion." And in May 1988 he gave a fellow councillor who disagreed with him two black eyes and a bloody nose. Just the sort of thing to liven up a dull debate in the new GLA!**

Letters

Private Eye

Dead Kennedys

Sir,

I am neither an academic nor a wit – purely a nurse, who for many years has been an avid reader of your organ. When you are controversial, championing and feisty, you have no equal, when you are predictable and lazy, your life support should be switched off.

Do not fall into the trap of trite comment about those killed under tragic circumstances ("John F. Kennedy Junior – an apology", Eye 981) – they are beyond any harm you may do. Think for a second about the shite time their family and friends are going through and confine your witty comments to those who have a pulse and can parry your editorial "humour".

Yours faithfully,
KATHLEEN MAGRATH,
Osterley, Middlesex.

Sir,

Your comments on the death of John Kennedy Jr. made sad and distasteful reading. It was also a distortion of the facts: he was not "a pampered playboy" – he worked and was involved in many charities. Your own hidden agenda of dislike was obvious, as was also the typical British envy of anyone young, attractive and wealthy. You insult your readers in assuming that they all think as you do.

Three young people are dead, who, I am sure, in their short lives did very little harm. Could the same be said of you?

Yours faithfully,
MRS B. WYNN-DAVIES,
Goring-by-Sea, W. Sussex.

Lookalike

Rembrandt

Hucknall

Sir,

So, Rembrandt learnt that every painting shouldn't just be Simply Red. But is this not really Mick Hucknall?

Regards,
DAVID DESBOROUGH,
London W1.

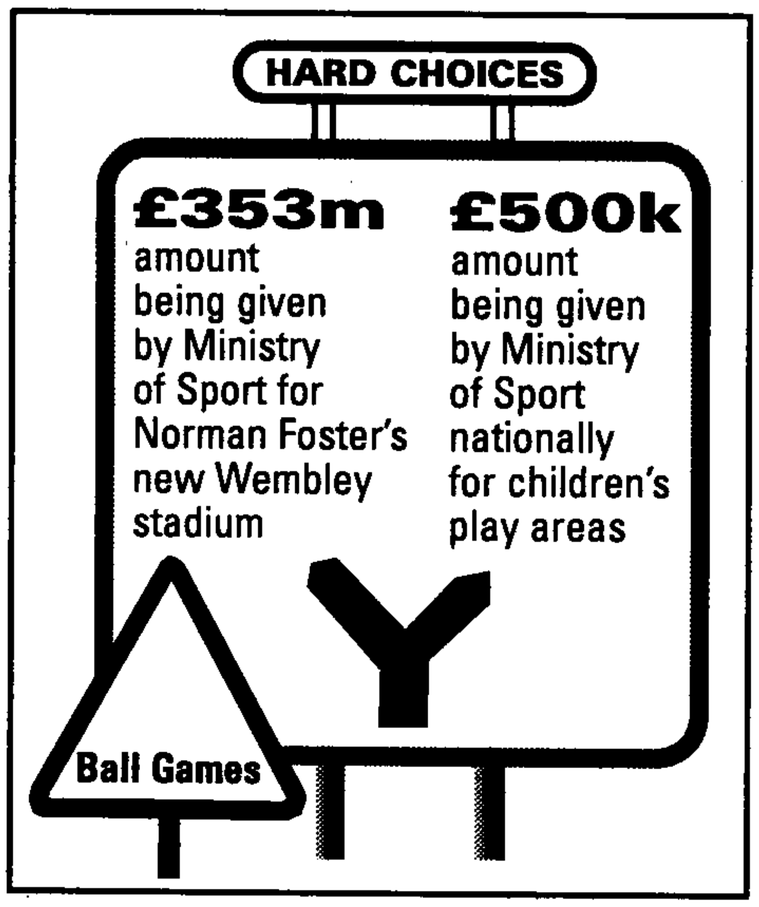
Median news

Sir,

Once again, it seems that MD is a bit confused when it comes to statistics. Examining the question of publication of results by heart surgery units (Eye 981), he/she states that this "raises problems because half, by definition, will be 'below average' – and who wants a below average heart surgeon?"

Here MD is confusing the average of distribution and its median. The latter is the middle of a distribution: half the values are above the median and half are below. The average and the median will only coincide in a symmetric distribution – one with no skew.

Yours sincerely,
DR ALEX MAY,
Division of Mathematical Biology, National Institute for Medical Research, London NW7.


HARD CHOICES
£353m
amount being given by Ministry of Sport for Norman Foster's new Wembley stadium
£500k
amount being given by Ministry of Sport nationally for children's play areas
Ball Games

Gunnell vision

Sir,

Re: Eye 981, "In The Tearoom". I am writing to you regarding the piece on my announcement to stand down as the Member for Morley and Rothwell at the next election.

I am drawing to your attention the following inaccuracies and observations regarding this brief article, namely:

1) You state that my "...paid roles on the boards of... Yorkshire Enterprise Ltd and York Trust Ltd have raised eyebrows among constituents.." In fact, I ceased to be a Director of Yorkshire Enterprise Ltd in 1996 and have never been involved with York Trust Ltd.

It would appear that your journalist has misread the Register as I am a Non-Executive Director of Yorkshire Fund Managers who are owned by both the companies you stated that I was employed by.

2) Yorkshire Fund Managers are a publicly owned regional venture capital company which assists small and medium enterprise businesses primarily in the Yorkshire region. It is widely regarded as a "Public interest company".

I receive a salary of £2,000 per annum for occasional involvement in meetings in Leeds. So far, the amount of my time spent with Yorkshire Fund Managers in 1999 I would estimate to be less than 10 hours.

3) I would like to know the origin of the quotation "burning the candle at both ends" which you attribute to me.

4) I have no intention whatsoever of continuing to be employed in any capacity by any organisation following the next general election, which I regard as my "retirement date".

5) Despite some health problems and a serious fall (that required a visit to St Thomas's), I remain, contrary to Private Eye, a full time Member of Parliament and look forward to serving my constituents until the next General Election.

The Register of Members Interests has shown my role at Yorkshire Fund Managers for a number of years.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN GUNNELL MP,
House of Commons, London SW1.

Channel What?

Sir,

David Elstein (Letters, Eye 981) may regard reference to Channel 5's "snowy pictures" as a "tired old chestnut", but then he doesn't live around here. When I last bothered to look, a couple of days ago, the picture quality was as poor as ever – in coverage of a football match, it was impossible to recognise individual players except in grainy close-up. I understand that a few miles inland you cannot get a picture at all.

Yours faithfully,
DR RICHARD A'BROOK,
Carnoustie, Angus.

Grumpy-pumpy

Sir,

Come off it – you enjoy looking at pictures of scantily-clad women and reading stories in the Times about sex as much as everyone else! At least I hope you do.

Tell Hackwatcher (Eye 981) not to be so grumpy.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON COBBY,
Via e-mail.

Lookalike

King

Minister

Sir,

I thought the enclosed photograph of a painting of King James I shows an uncanny resemblance to our minister for defence George Robertson.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN MAGGS,
East Kilbride.

Finger in Dyke

Sir,

In "York University Gives Honorary Degree To Greg Dyke" (Eye 981), you refer to a donation of MLV libri. This translates as £1055, or, according to your equally innumerate cover (Eye 978), 0.01266 Euros.

Fingers out if you want a chance of passing your Maths "O" Level.

Yours,
STEVE TOFT,
Thieusies, Belgium.

LUVVIES

"I fell in love with the idea of trying to live artistically. You know, in places like France and Spain, there's an art to life, to dressing, to talking, even to eating. I wanted art in my life."

AISLING O'SULLIVAN
Sunday Express

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

T-Media News

Sir,

I am not surprised that Eye's occasional snipes at BBC World provoke so many letters of support for the service from around the world. But your Media News piece about my letter to the Independent (Eye 981) is based on serious misinformation.

The recent TV journalism workshop in Croatia, where BBC World's Kosovo coverage received widespread praise, was organised by Circom Regional, Europe's Association of Regional Television, with delegates from 15 Central European countries. It had no connection whatsoever with BBC World. And far from BBC World being one of the "biggest clients" of my consultancy, T-Media, it has never been one of our clients.

The young journalists in Croatia know that fair journalism requires "facts" to be checked before publication. I'm sure the Eye journalists would agree.

RICK THOMPSON,
Director T-Media (Formerly Editor Newsgathering BBC World Service 1994-1996).

Zambian discussion?

Sir,

I act for the Amateur Players of Sherborne (next production, Arcadia by Tom Stoppard, Dec 2-4) and was surprised to note from your last edition that Kate Adie, the well-known journalist, needed to employ Messrs Sue, Grabbit and Runne to write a simple two-paragraph letter to your organ.

If Ms Adie would like to pop round to my house one evening I would be happy to help her refresh her keyboarding skills on my Apple Mac and, time permitting, would also be glad to hear her expert opinion on the current political situation in East Africa.

Yours,
STEVE EVANS,
Sherborne, Dorset.

To hell and back

Sir,

Re: Rotten Boroughs, Issue 953. In November 1997 Councillor A.J. Hooper issued proceedings in the Truro County Court against me claiming damages for assault "exceeding £3,000". I denied the allegation and also pointed out to the court that Councillor Hooper had exaggerated his claim in order to be able to claim costs to which he would otherwise not be entitled.

In March 1998 on the advice of my solicitors, I paid £750 into court to avoid the risk of a hefty costs bill. Mr Hooper accepted that money and in doing so prevented the matter from proceeding to trial. He also claimed in the press that he would be awarded costs "in excess of £5,000".

On 1 October 1998 at Truro County Court, Deputy District Judge Graham Lee ruled that Councillor Hooper should not be awarded his legal costs because his original claim had indeed been exaggerated. Councillor Hooper's appeal against that order was dismissed by His Honour Judge Thompson QC on the 2 December 1998.

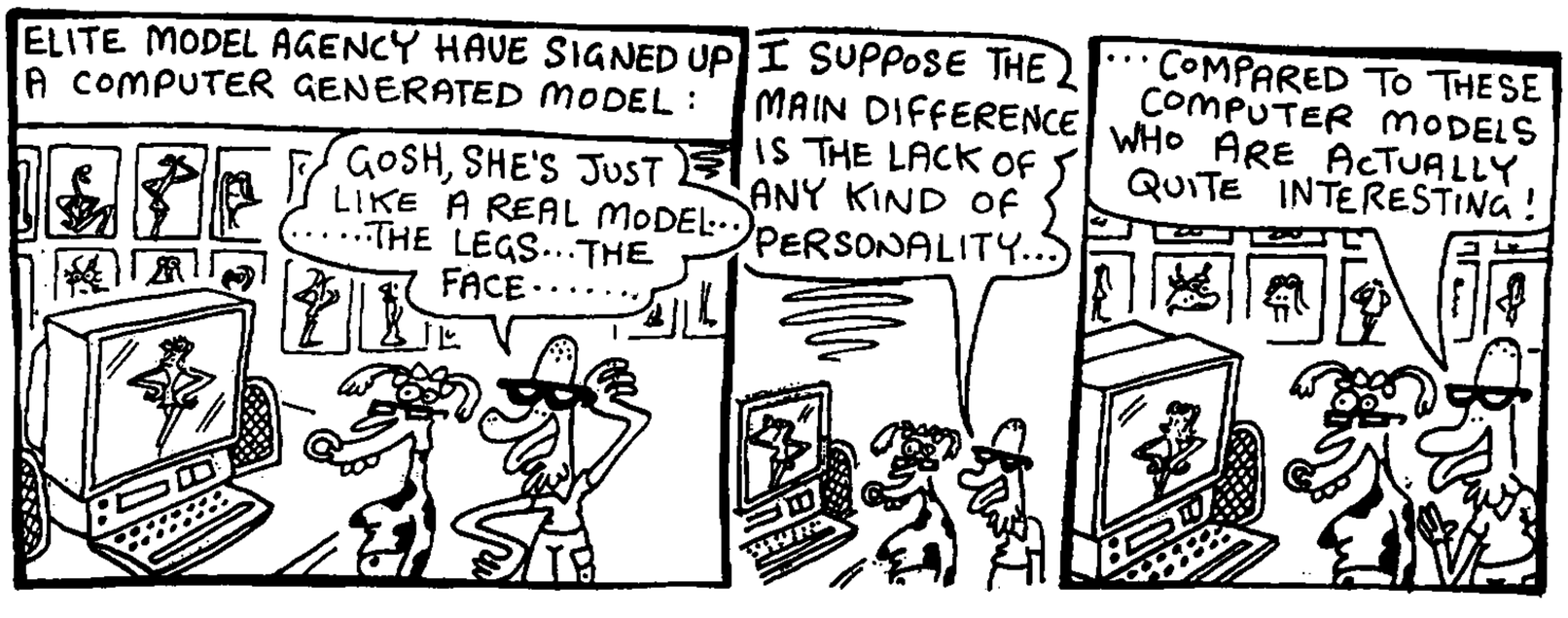
Councillor Hooper was ordered to pay my costs of both hearings and has now done so.

My wife and I have been through hell in dealing with Councillor Hooper's claim; it is heartening to us both to realise the courts have recognised Councillor Hooper was unjustified in setting the limit of his claim beyond any reasonable expectation of recovery.

G.B. DOWN,
St Austell, Cornwall.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


ELITE MODEL AGENCY HAVE SIGNED UP A COMPUTER GENERATED MODEL :
GOSH, SHE'S JUST LIKE A REAL MODEL... .....THE LEGS...THE FACE.....
I SUPPOSE THE MAIN DIFFERENCE IS THE LACK OF ANY KIND OF PERSONALITY...
...COMPARED TO THESE COMPUTER MODELS WHO ARE ACTUALLY QUITE INTERESTING!

I-SPY

Home Free catalogue

Submitted by Tony Tomkins. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Kellner in context

Sir,

Twice in "Street of Shame" (Eyes 979 and 980) you have described my wife, Catherine Ashton, and me as current directors and shareholders of the public affairs company Political Context Ltd. In fact my wife resigned as a director, returned her shares and severed all links with the company in March last year, prior to taking up her appointment as Chairman of the East and North Herts Health Authority. I resigned as a director and disposed of my shares in April this year, when the company was sold.

In the same two issues you state that in a recent Evening Standard feature I "singled out" for praise two peers working with Political Context. In fact, over two days I listed 138 peers with good attendance, speaking and voting records, according to objective criteria which I laid out in the two features. A number of these peers have had links over the years with various public affairs companies, including rivals of Political Context. I neither played up nor played down any reference to any peer because of any associations with Political Context or any other company.

I agree with your implicit point that conflicts of interest need to be avoided. That is why I never "plugged" any clients of Political Context in the media, nor lobbied any minister, official or MP on their behalf. My contribution to the company consisted solely of polling and related analysis.

Yours faithfully,
PETER KELLNER,

St Albans.

So. Adios, then

Sir,

I was delighted that Lord Gnome had seen fit to have young E.J. Thribb write an In Memoriam (Eye 981) for the great, blind musician from Spain, but his name was Joaquin RODRIGO.

Mil gracias como siempre.

NICHOLAS J. COLLINS,

Via e-mail.

Cushy numbers

Sir,

I am not sure that John Simpson deserves the sobriquet "most unpopular correspondent" in Kosovo (Eye 981) on the basis of a ludicrous report in the Guardian and his willingness to endanger his wife's life (rather than some other "correspondent's"), by choosing to have her work with him on a cushy little three-month sojourn in war-torn Kosovo.

The chances of the Guardian's story being correct – (or being taken seriously by anyone who knows the length of time it takes to collect the material, write it up, and then send off a despatch) – seems slim. My pocket calculator suggests that he bashed out a despatch every 10 minutes, on the fateful day. If Simpson was so unprofessional as to grab, say, five hours sleep and take a further hour to carry out any other necessary bodily functions, then his rate of despatch would rise to just over seven minutes a time. At that rate I suspect his "unpopularity" might be prompted by a modicum of envy.

Cheers,
HARRY TREHERNE,

London SW7.

C*R*A*S*H

Sir,

With reference to the "charming acronym" NERC for the new air traffic control centre in Hampshire, would not "Centre for Routing Aircraft Safely Home" be more appropriate?

Yours etc,
FRANK NUNNELEY,

Via e-mail.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Host: *Which fruit has varieties called Mandarin and Seville?*
Contestant: *Er... spinach.*
BBC1
(Ben Finn)

"For the first time in fifty years bus passenger numbers have risen to their highest level ever."
JOHN PRESCOTT, Radio 4
(Alun Morris)

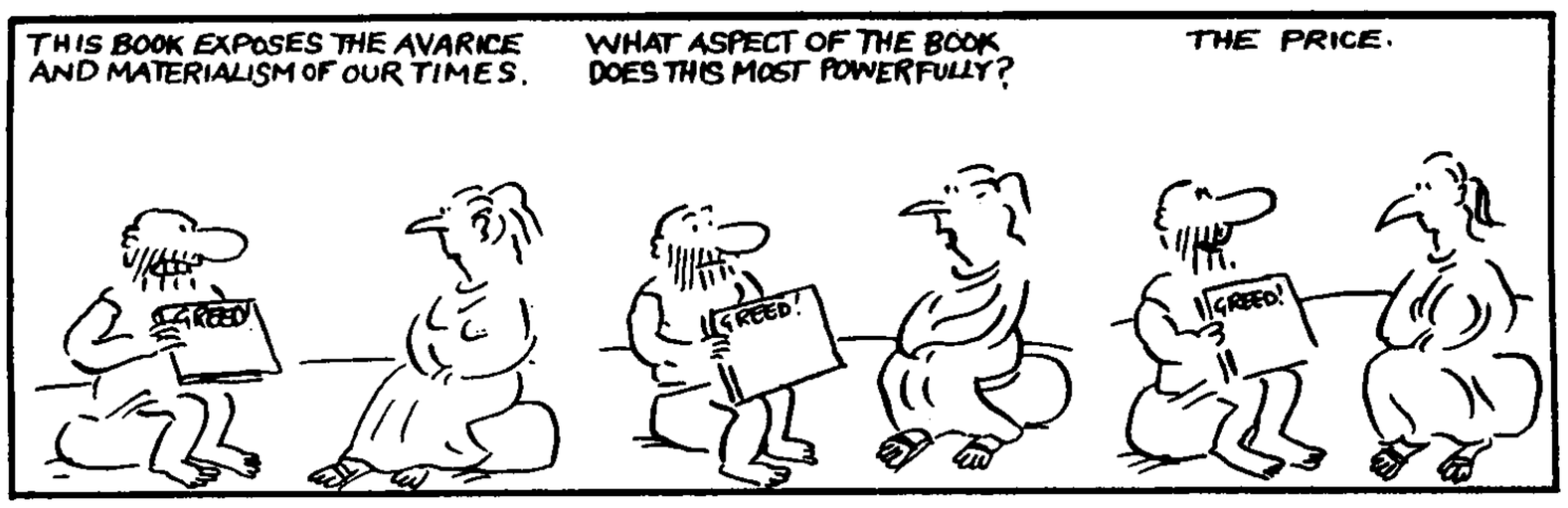
"He just got his body between himself and the goal."
RAY CLEMENCE, Channel 5
(Jon Gerrard)

"...of course, Bizet never knew that Carmen was a great success until after his death..."
MICHAEL BARCLAY, Radio 4
(Jane Marshall)

"Ralf Schumacher speaking in German for our English listeners..."
ELEANOR OLDROYD, Radio 5 Live
(Keith Lievesley)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN


THIS BOOK EXPOSES THE AVARICE AND MATERIALISM OF OUR TIMES.
WHAT ASPECT OF THE BOOK DOES THIS MOST POWERFULLY?
THE PRICE.
GREED
GREED!
GREED!

Letter from **Angola**
from Our Own Correspondent

THIRD World tyrants and warlords may come and go, but one man, Jonas Savimbi, has been bringing misery to our country for a quarter of a century.

He was defeated by the Marxist MPLA in the civil war that broke out in 1975 after the departure of the Portuguese colonists, but the US and apartheid South Africa helped him rebuild his Unita forces and carry on the fight. In 1994 he signed a peace deal with the government in Luanda – but refused to disarm or hand over the diamond-rich territories he controlled, even after losing a fair nationwide election.

In the past year his 30,000-strong army has over-run 70 per cent of the country, while the world's attention has been focussed on the wars in neighbouring Congo and in Kosovo. It's bad news for President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos – and even worse news for our country's children.

For the renewed fighting has wrecked a major UN-backed campaign to eradicate polio. At least 1,000 Angolan children have been killed or crippled by the virus this year. Hopes of eradicating polio worldwide by the year 2000 – the UN's intended "priceless gift to the 21st century" – are in tatters. Half a million Angolan children probably carry the disease.

Last month thousands of volunteers were mobilised in a national immunisation day, and more than 80 per cent of under-fives in government-held areas were vaccinated. The UN had hoped to broker an immunisation ceasefire, so that children in rebel areas could be vaccinated too. Savimbi showed what he thought of that when his forces murdered one vaccination team and shot down two UN planes.

The failure to achieve a ceasefire means the UN must now find an additional $500m to extend the immunisation campaign. This figure is strikingly similar to the estimated annual $500m worth of illicit gems, used to finance Unita arms purchases, which somehow ends up with the central selling organisation – the sister company of diamond giant De Beers. The same De Beers, by the way, which recently donated $3m towards the immunisation drive. The irony has not been lost on Angolans. Furious with Savimbi's increasing obstinacy, the UN is now seeking to tighten sanctions against Unita, reducing the weapons flow by clamping down on the diamond trade.

With massive oil and mineral reserves, Angola should be one of the richest countries in Africa, but virtually all its recourses have been spent on conflict – mostly instigated by Savimbi.

With humanitarian assistance diverted to Kosovo, relief agencies are struggling to cope with a massive funding deficit. Civilians pay the price. Mounting malnutrition and disease mean children are often piled three to a bed in the hospitals. A child has a one-in-four chance of dying before reaching his or her fifth birthday. Only four children in 10 go to school, and only one in 10 complete primary education.

Poverty and displacement has forced thousands of youngsters into the sex trade. In Launda's Roque Santeiro market, an 11 year old prostitute can be bought for the price of a bottle of beer. Younger girls are more expensive, as sex with virgins is widely believed to be a cure for Aids.

As refugees from the fighting crowd into the cities, thousands of street kids scavenge rubbish dumps and entire families sleep in wrecked cars. They collect water from broken sewers yet frequently blame their outbreaks of sickness on sorcery.

Unicef says Angola is the world's worst country for children, measuring health, child mortality, education, HIV prevalence and conflict. Children in hell-holes such as Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Somalia are all better off.

Jonas Savimbi, meanwhile, is doing his best to keep it that way.

OH, YEAH? A NEW COLUMN OF AMAZING FACTS

"Once Tony Blair comes back from Tuscany after a nice margarita by the swimming pool, I think he will say to me, 'you stand, sunshine, be my candidate'."

– Ken Livingstone, *The Times, 30 July*

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● "Both foolish and clever people have the right to live," declared philosophy professor Yu Pingzhe of Sichuan University as he protested outside the newly-opened "Notables' Sperm Bank" in Chengdu. "What is happening here is unethical. And from the viewpoint of genetics, the sperm of highly-educated people may not be any better than that of ignorant people. It's well-known that most intelligent people are ugly, so they should allow the sperm of beautiful stupid people in too, and let everyone take their chances."

The government-run sperm bank has caused an outcry in south-west China by

announcing that it will accept donations only from those who have a master's degree, or a higher educational qualification. "Since we opened, we have received a barrage of applications from intellectuals, both as donors and recipients," said a spokeswoman. "Intelligent couples want to have intelligent offspring. They don't want to have stupid children who will be a constant embarrassment to them. But sperm rates have dropped by over 50% in the past ten years in the cities and the industrialised zones, so we are paying high prices to intellectuals who live in the countryside, and can provide us with intelligent and healthy sperm. That is why our charges for artificial insemination are much much higher than the 20,000 yuan you pay at run-of-the-mill clinics. Our sperm is vintage." *(Straits Times [Singapore], 7 July 1999. Spotter: "Anon of 'uddersfield")*

—●—

● "I'm a student, so every bit helps," said Thomas Hendry, when questioned by reporters about his recent success. "Yes, it was worth the pain. I thought my act was pretty unbeatable, I won the money, and that's what I was aiming for."

Days earlier, Hendry had scooped $NZ 1,000 in Trader McKendry's Tavern's controversial promotion "How Far Will You Go?" but at a price. "I knew when I entered that I'd have to do something special to win. I saw an earlier contestant pierce his penis foreskin with a safety pin, and I thought I could do better than that. So when it was my turn, I stapled my scrotum and foreskin to a white pine crucifix with an industrial stapler, then poured cigarette lighter fluid over it and set it alight. The act nearly turned to disaster when I started my African dancing, which caused the flames to burn my penis. The fire extinguisher I'd brought with me refused to work, but luckily a guy threw his beer all over me, and that put out the fire. They declared me the winner, and I went straight down to the students' medical centre to get my burns treated. Everything's fine now, the dressings come off next week, and I can pay some bills and buy some clothes."

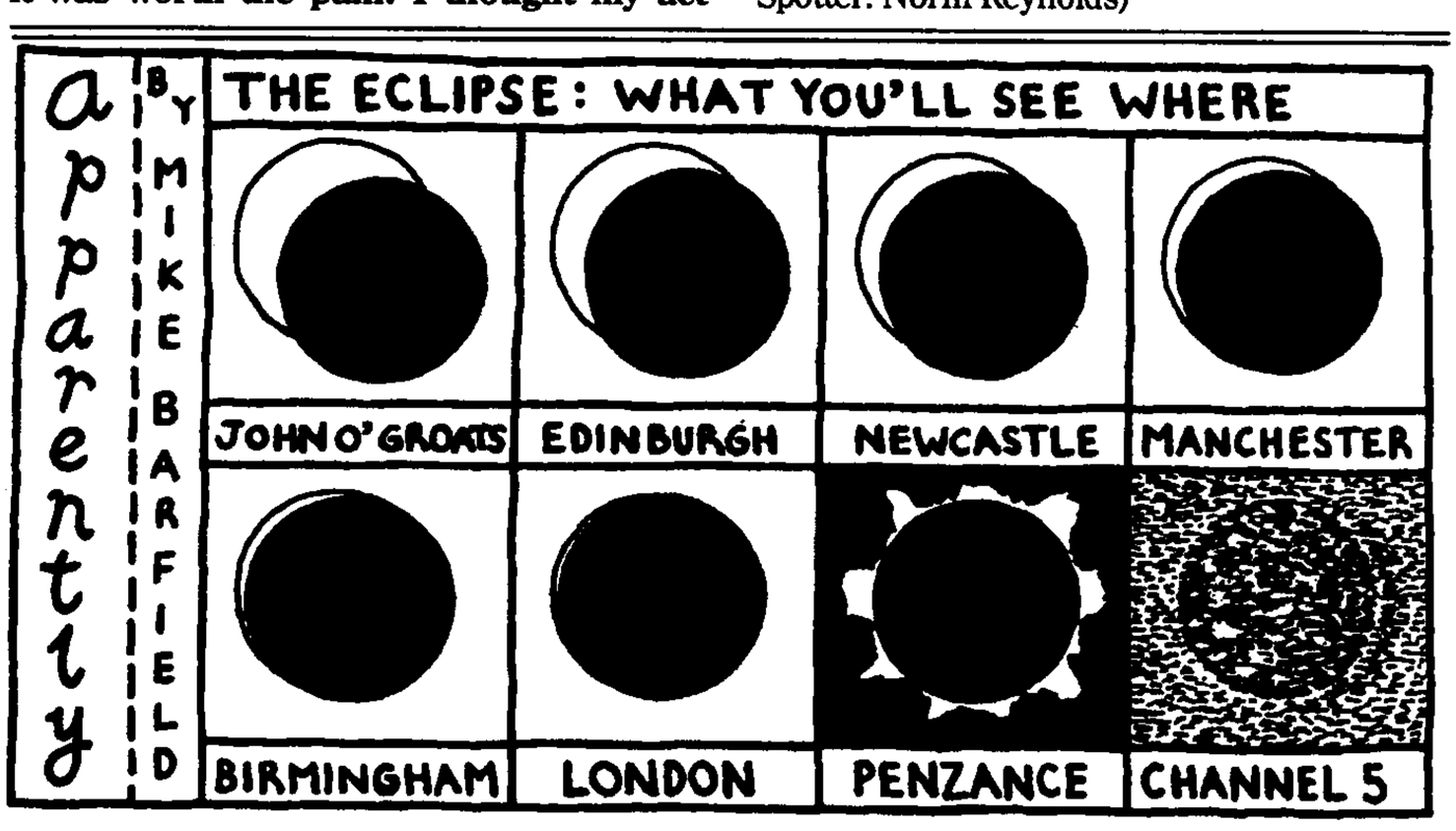
Later, Hendry's mother Barbara spoke of her feelings. "Some people are calling him sick, but I'm just glad he won. I would have hated for him to go through all that and not achieve the object of it all. But he still hasn't got a girlfriend. And that does worry me." *(Sydney Morning Herald, 9 July 1999. Spotter: Henrietta Lewis)*

—●—

● *"We can confirm that the United States Drug Enforcement Administration did not – repeat not – implant a tracking device in defendant Vincent Marino's buttocks," US attorney Donald Stern told a judge in Worcester, Massachusetts. "We speak for the government on this matter, although we cannot comment on whether any extraterrestrial beings might have implanted such a device."*

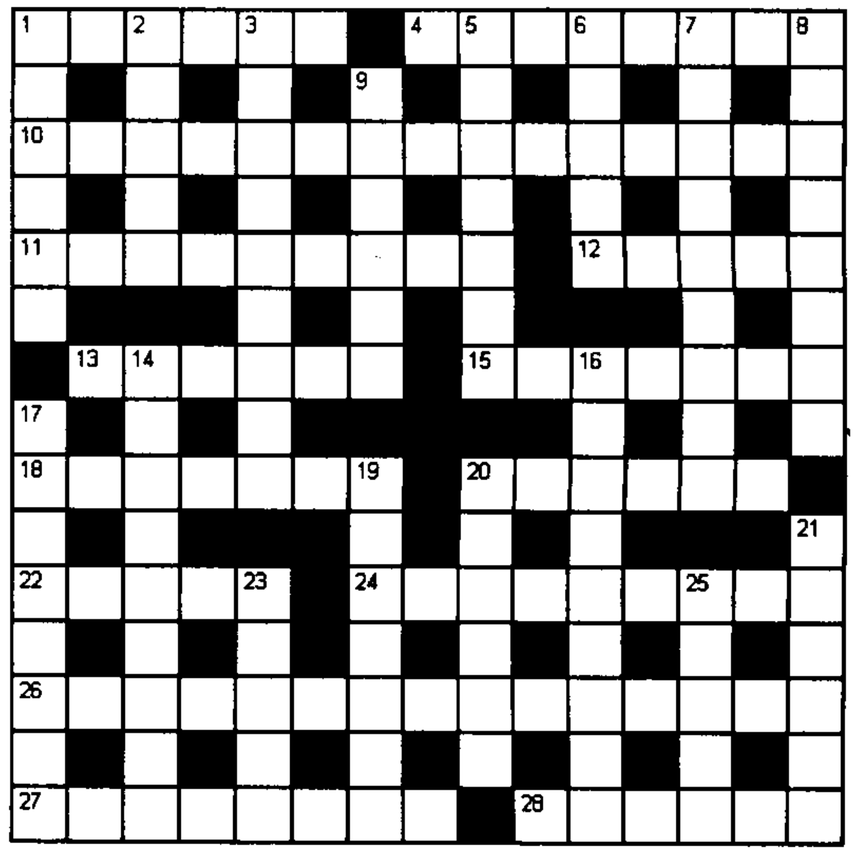
Stern made his unusual statement following repeated claims by Vincent "Gigi Portalla" Marino that his buttocks had been interfered with by the US authorities several years earlier. "In 1996, I was shot in the left buttock," he had earlier told the judge. "It was during a gunfight at the Revere club. While the surgeons were removing the bullet, they put a tracking device in me. A federal drug agent told me so, after they arrested me. He told me I'd have to sign a form if I wanted it removed. That's how they kept track of me all these years. They have been listening to private conversations between me and my maker. I say it's a violation of my constitutional rights."

Marino and six other defendants are currently awaiting trial in Massachusetts, accused of waging a murderous battle to seize control of the New England mafia. Marino declined to have his buttocks X-rayed. (The Courier-Mail [Brisbane], 17 June 1999. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)



EYE CROSSWORD 137

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Opinionated driver that's after a BBC broadcast (6)
4 Coming alternative fuel at end of millennium ('99) (8)
10 Many in this country hope to witness this tabloid's decline (7,2,3,3)
11 End snipped off genitalia by Elizabeth – Drake's crafty means of getting rich? (9)
12 Country sees end of Tony in flipping broadcast (5)
13 Adding nothing to length, England's last bowler possibly is past it (3,3)
15 Man of standing abroad, fine little editor? F-off! (7)
18 Guts displayed by batting teams (7)
20 Drive yourself to find a sexual partner – Tom, maybe? (6)
22 Hurley entwined with good bloke but it's been ages since he scored (5)
24 Tunes cycle for Nato action? (9)
26 Just, we hear, room at post-revolutionary Russian self-contained living quarters (3,5,7)
27 Community whips not deployed (8)
28 Church worker, female, possibly, not ordained (6)

DOWN

1 To brown-nose luvvy's butt is a bit weird (6)
2 Dish T. Blair's move to abandon Right (5)
3 Clinton was one politician mounting every single journalist (9)
5 Whistle-blower, one who's passed on elsewhere? (7)
6 What one who's been fired is reduced to (5)
7 Regret the absence of Charles, so it's reported, often appearing in the *Grauniad*? (9)
8 Drug girl restricted by basic distribution (8)
9 No date for gender-change model royal stand-in (6)
14 To endure a Labour minister – that would be unbearable (4,5)
16 Oddball Friar Tuck smashed right away on a drug (5,4)
17 PM told a crack about Italian ambassador (8)
19 Contemporary art collector was a poser around one, endlessly stylish (7)
20 New Porsche, though not hot, gets you stiff (6)
21 Pisspoor Noel's suppressing names of pop legend ... (6)
23 ... He's without capital after hit records (5)
25 Thicko bloody ex-leader has nothing on Tony initially! (5)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 13.8.99. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 136

Winner: SAM STEPHEN

ACROSS: 1/28 Sugar daddy 4 Agincourt 9/5 Freedom of Information 10 Hefty 11 Dunce 12 Lord Byron 13 Up and up 15 Art sale 17 Sisters 19 Illness 21 Lord Lucan 22 Opium 24 Ogler 25 Inflation 27 Agamemnon 28 (see 1ac.).

DOWN: 1 Soft drugs 2 Green 3 Redhead 4 Arm 5 (see 9) 6 Cohabit 7 Up for sale 8 Try-on 12 Liposuction 14 Australia 16 Easy money 18 Enlarge 20 Leotard 21 L-dopa 23 Iliad 26 Fan.

KNACKER – NEW DANDO THEORY

by Our Crime Staff **Nick Blackman**

A PLAINLY-delighted Inspector Knacker of the Yard revealed to a crowded press conference today that Jill Dando's killer was "almost certainly" an extraterrestrial being.

Said the Inspector, "We have examined minute markings on the pavement which match the patterns made by spacecraft leaving in a hurry."

Knacker continued, "This is why we have never been able to arrest the alien hitman who may well have had an obsession with the popular TV presenter and become infuriated when his advances were rejected."

NO IDEAS AT ALL

But this was not all the Inspector revealed to amazed journalists.

"The alien hitman theory is only one of thousands of leads which we are following up in the hope of convincing the public that we do have a clue what happened here."

GRAND SUMMER POLITICAL QUIZ

CAN any readers imagine what the Foreign Secretary might be saying to his new minister Baroness Scotland?

Possible themes for submissions: The War in Kosovo, Third World Debt and Reform of the EU Commission.

Ten Ways To Keep Your Kids Safe And Happy This Summer

1. Do not let your children talk to anyone except an authorised adult such as the Head of Ofsted.
2. Do not let your children go out of doors at any time.
3. Lock them up for a minimum of 24 hours a day.
4. Do not let any stranger within a mile of your home.
5. Encourage your children to engage in activities that do not involve dangerous human contact – watching television, surfing the internet or playing video games.
6. Er...
7. You know it makes sense.
8. Er...
9. Er...
10. That's it.

(Issued by the NSPCC – the National Society for the Prevention of Carefree Children)

SALLY JOCKSTRAP The Voice Of Sport

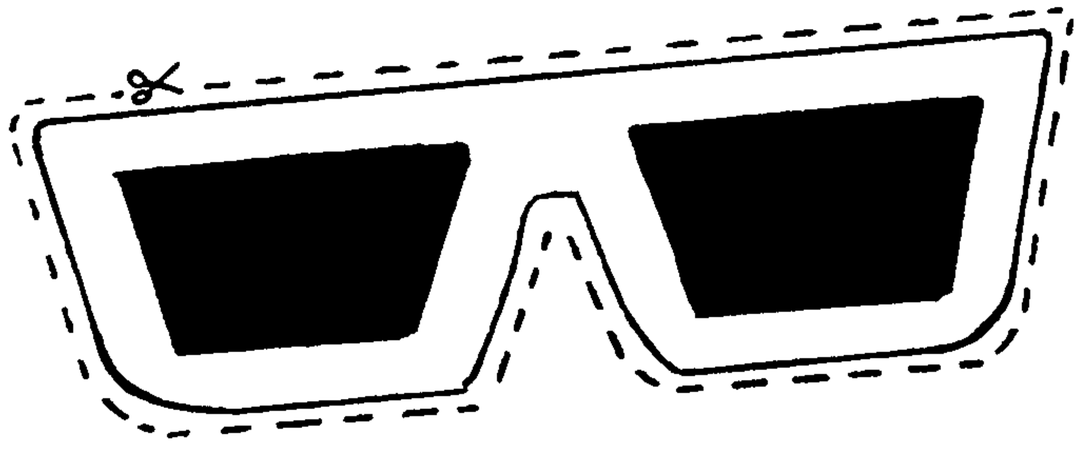
THE great winter of sport is well underway, with the cricket season only a week away. But there's one fly in the ointment as far as I'm concerned. Why have Yorkshire decided not to defend the FA Cup? It's time manager Sarah Ferguson came clean!!

TALKING of golf, it's good news that Boris Becker is coming back next year. He's far too young to retire as Britain's leading jockey!

AND, on a personal note, I am pleased to tell you that I have been made Minister for Sport in place of Ken Livingstone. My thanks to Prime Minister Franki di Tory for giving me a chance to bring some sense into boxing. ***Tally Hoey!***

AMAZING GNOME ECLIPSE OFFER

THE SAFE WAY TO WATCH THE ECLIPSE!



Simply cut out these specially treated medically-approved spectacles and put them on during the eclipse.

Providing that you close your eyes and look in the other direction for the duration of the eclipse, you will suffer no ill-effects.

These glasses are provided entirely free in the interests of public safety.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And a very sunny hullo it is too!

I'm not going to claim credit for all the wonderful weather we've been having, obviously! But it is one of the things I promised to sort out when I took over at St Albion's, and it's good to know that we've met our target of a 30 percent improvement in sunny days over the last year!

Some of you will have read this in our parish "end-of-term report", which is now available in Tesco's in the High Street for the very modest sum of £5.99.

Perhaps our friend in Tesco would like to economise on his purchases of South African Chardonnay and buy a copy, so that he can be better informed when he next accosts me in the "8 Items Or Less" queue to make some pathetic point about hospital waiting lists going up!

And let me say that this "Letter To The Tesconians", as I call it, is a fully independent report on all our achievements, not written by me but by a completely unbiassed observer, ie Mr Campbell.

For those of us who are too mean to pay the £5.99 (Mr Benn or Mr Hattersley might know who I am thinking of here!), let me summarise the contents.

And to make it simpler I have listed all the promises I made when I came to the parish, and then shown how I have managed to keep every one of them! ("By their deeds shall ye know them," *Book of Common Blair*.)

1. New-look flower roster *(done)*
2. New carpet to be ordered for vestry *(done)*
3. Millennium Window *(commissioned)*
4. Peace in Northern Ireland *(on the way!)*
5. An end to world poverty by 2010 *(done)*

And with a record like this, it's hardly suprising that I've decided to keep on with the same team ministry that has come up with such good results!

Look, Our Lord didn't reshuffle the disciples every ten minutes, did he – promoting some and demoting others? He kept the same winning team year in and year out, and that's my policy too!

I don't know who started all those rumours that I was about to sack Mrs Beckett, just because she kept going on holiday in her caravan instead of attending to parish business, but they must feel pretty silly now!

Ditto all those people who were convinced that I was going to replace Mr Cunningham as Church Warden, Mrs Mowlam as head of the Mission to St Gerry's and Mr Prescott for messing up the car parking outside the church!

How ridiculous! As the Good Book has it, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" *(Book of Proverbs, Ch. 6)*.

And, talking of "breaks", Cherie and I and the family are off for a well-earned one to our favourite haunt in Tuscany, the Castello di Freebi near Siena.

We all hope to recharge our batteries in the olive groves far away from the cares and pressures of parish life!

Not that I am in any way tired or in need of a holiday! But Cherie and the children really do deserve a bit more quality time with me!

There's a lesson there, I feel, for all of us men, isn't there?

Ciao,

Antonio!

Notices

■ Congratulations to the ladies of the parish who have featured so prominently on my new list of rotas. It just goes to show that women are just as capable as men of doing key parish jobs – like arranging the flowers and organising the teas – and, let's face it, they brighten the place up a bit!

■ Special congratulations to Kate Whoshe who from now on will be in charge of the half-time oranges for St Albion's Soccer XI. Well done, Kate, and good luck.

■ Friday is the feast of the Transfiguration when one leader's followers realised that he was not just some common mortal. Think about it.

T.B.

MARRIAGE BANNS

I would like to publish the banns of marriage between Gordon Brown, bachelor of this parish, and Sarah Macaulay, spinster of the PR-ish of Hobsbawm. This is for the 49th time of asking. If anyone knows of any reason why these two aren't getting married, I'd like to know. T.B.

Parish Postbag

Dear Sir,

I was deeply shocked to hear the Vicar suddenly announcing in the middle of his sermon the other day that he thought fox-hunting was a sin. Some of us thought he must have been at the Communion wine. Otherwise, why did he

Yours sincerely,
Anne Mallalieu, Tally Ho!
Mortimer St John, Sabs.

The Editor reserves the right to cut all letters in favour of fox-hunting for reasons of space. A.C.

Valete...

Mrs Jackson and **Mr Banks**, who are stepping down from the PCC to spend more time auditioning for the role of the Lord Mayor of London in the St Albion's Christmas panto. Good luck to them both, and may the best man win! (Not Mr Livingstone!) T.B.

My Prayer For Kosovo – *as delivered by myself last week when I was actually there (unlike some of my critics)*

Let us pray that all the people may lay aside their age-old hatreds and live together henceforth in peace, harmony and brotherly love.

Hey! Forgive and forget, guys!

Amen

All parishioners are urged to use this form of address in their private devotions. T.B.

The Vicar On Holiday

"Which way, Dad?" "The Third Way of course"

That Parkinson Honorary Degree From Hull University In Full

SALUTAMUS MICHAELUM PARKINSONIUS, NOMINATES VULGARE "PARKY", FILIUS BARNSLEYENSIS ET HOSPES CHATTERATUS PROGRAMMIS IN TELEVISIONE PER MULTOS ANNOS SYCOPHANTISSIMIS AD CELEBEBRITATIS AMERICANOS, PER EXEMPLO CASSIUS CLAYIUS ET FREDERICUS ASTAIRUS ET BOBBUS HOPUS ET CETERA ET CETERA. SED MEMORABILIS SUPER OMNES PER INCIDENTUM QUANDO HUMILIATUS ERAT AB EMU, AVIS HORRIBILIS AUSTRALIS, ET MANIPULATOR RODERICUS HULLIUS, AD TREMENDISSIMO DILECTIUM OMNE POPULI, QUI CONTINUERUNT DISCUSSERE HIC MOMENTUS IN HISTORIA TELEVISUALIS BRITANNICI AD INFINITUM. SALUTAMUS EMU, AUT DOCTORUS EMU, HONORARIUM PROFESSORE LITTERAE. *(CERTE SHUMUS ERRORUS? EDITORIUS)*

© UNIVERSITY OF ROD HULL MXCIX

Traditional English Willow Pattern

Traditional English Leather-On-Willow Pattern

NURSERY TIMES

FRIDAY 6 AUGUST 1999

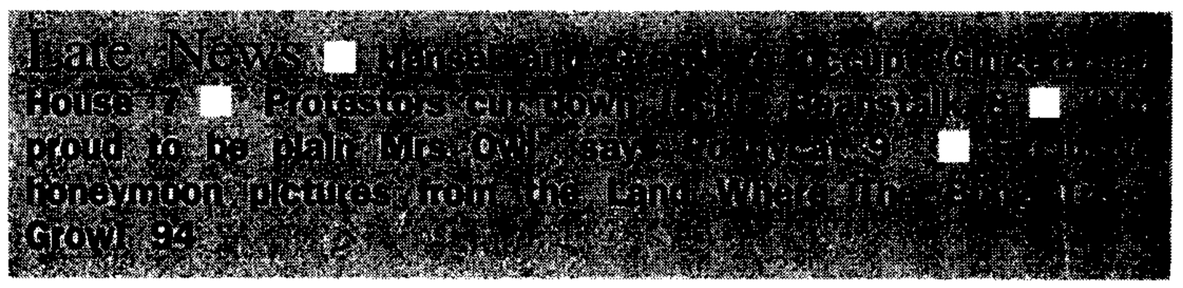
SQUATTER GIVEN HOUSE FOR FREE

By Our Social Affairs Staff
Polly Put-the-kettle-on-Toynbee

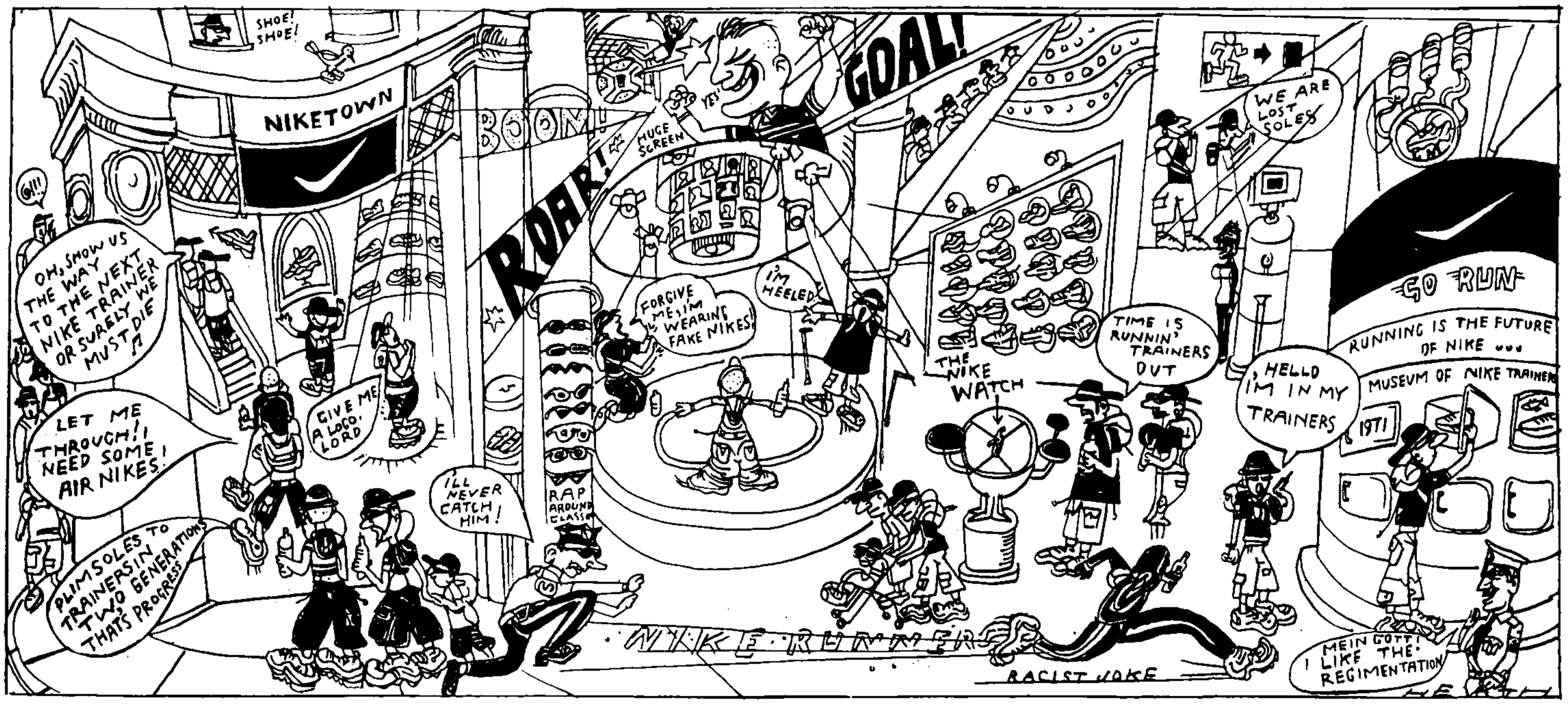
A YOUNG single woman was yesterday handed a desirable 3 bedroom woodland cottage worth an estimated 200,000 chocolate coins.

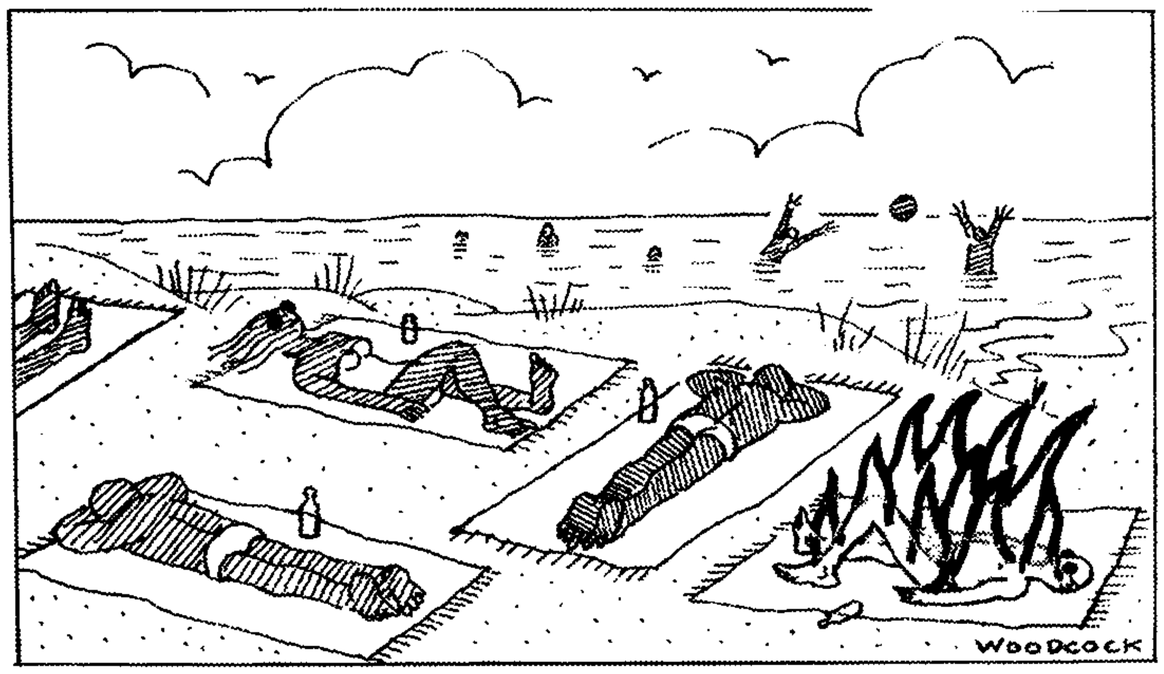
There was outrage when Ms Goldilocks, previously of no fixed abode, became the owner of Three Bears Cottage. Ms Goldilocks claimed ownership on the basis that the property was unoccupied, the door was open, and that she had merely exercised her rights as a squatter to take possession of the porridge, the chairs and the beds. "I don't see what the fuss is about," said Ms Goldilocks. "This place needs a lot of work. Some of the porridge is too hot, two of the beds are the wrong size and one of the chairs is broken."

However, an angry Mr Bear told reporters, "Ms Goldilocks has not paid rates, council tax or a mortgage. What kind of example is this to set to law-abiding home-owners? If this goes on, old women will end up demanding to own the shoes that they live in."



HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


SHOE! SHOE!
NIKETOWN
BOOM!
ROAR!
HUGE SCREEN
GOAL!
WE ARE LOST SOLES
OH, SHOW US THE WAY TO THE NEXT NIKE TRAINER OR SURELY WE MUST DIE !!
LET ME THROUGH! I NEED SOME AIR NIKES!
PLIMSOLES TO TRAINERS IN TWO GENERATIONS THAT'S PROGRESS
GIVE ME A LOGO, LORD
FORGIVE ME, I'M WEARING FAKE NIKES!
I'M HEELED!
ILL NEVER CATCH HIM!
RAP AROUND CLASSIC
THE NIKE WATCH
TIME IS RUNNIN' TRAINERS OUT
HELLO I'M IN MY TRAINERS
GO RUN
RUNNING IS THE FUTURE OF NIKE ...
MUSEUM OF NIKE TRAINERS
1971
MEIN GOTT! I LIKE THE REGIMENTATION
NIKE RUNNERS
RACIST JOKE



Cheap suntan oil

AMAZING NEW EVIDENCE THAT CHIMPS CAN COMMUNICATE

by Our Science Staff **Lunchtime O'Rangutan**

TODAY I saw with my own eyes that a group of monkeys equipped with keyboards can produce a daily newspaper.

When I visited the Wapping compound of the Murdoch Research Institute, I witnessed a sight I shall never forget.

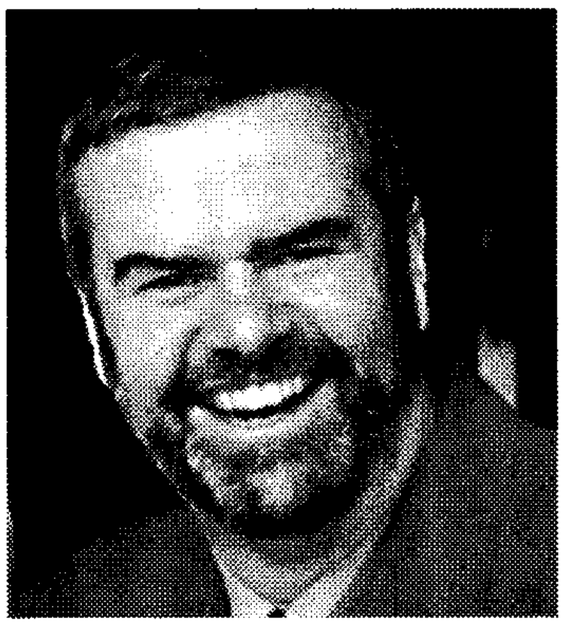
One fully grown-up ape, affectionately known to his keeper as "Yelland", was shown a photograph of holidaymakers sitting on the beach.

Within minutes he had tapped out on his keypad the sentence "Phew What A Scorcher – Britain Sizzles In Mediterranean-Style Heatwave".

One of his fellow-chimps was then shown a picture of a semi-clad girl from Essex.

Again, within a short time, he keyed in the words "Phew What A Stunna – Britain Sizzles As Tracy Strips Off".

A third picture was then presented to the chimps, showing media-mogul Rupert Murdoch.



Garry is almost human and is so clever that he can switch on Sky TV unaided!

At this they became restless and excited, and tried to lick the bottom of the man in the photograph.

Said one supervisor, "These apes are really showing remarkable progress, but it is early days and it will be some years before we can let them loose to run The Times."

SHOULD DONORS HAVE RIGHT TO ANONYMITY?

by Our Medical Staff
Cristina O'Donor

THE TIME-honoured principle that people who donate their cheques to help barren political parties should remain anonymous is under threat from the Blair government.

The prime minister yesterday claimed that people have a right to know the identity of the sugar daddies to whom they owe their life.

Mr Hague, however, claimed that this was "an appalling invasion of privacy" and would mean "the end of the Conservative Party as we know it".

SPERM DONORS
Tracing your parents ...

THE DAILY WILLOGRAPH

Blond Youth Wears Sunglasses

by Our Entire Staff Phil Space

A tall young man, aged 17, yesterday put on a pair of sunglasses. *(Reuter)*

Inside:

Are Wills's shades passé? **2**

Britain's top 10 fashion shades and where to get them **3**

Pictures of girls in bikinis wearing sunglasses **4-6**

Does wearing sunglasses cause skin cancer? asks Dr Stuttaford **7**

Telegraph Wills-style sunglasses offer **8**

Why oh why does the heir to the throne have to wear these vulgar sunglasses? asks Dr John Queeney of Casey College, Cambridge **9**

Why sunglasses cost less in Europe – are UK consumers being ripped off? **10**

Alexander Chancellor: my first pair of sunglasses **11**

Shades of the prison house – new poem by Jonathan Aitkeats, Britain's foremost criminal versifier **12**

Unfunny cartoon by Sir Nicholas Garland showing Blair wearing sunglasses inscribed "Government Annual End-Of-Term Report" over quotation from Shakespeare "The sun hath got his hat on, methinks" *(Measure For Measure, Act II, Sc. 7)* **13**

And much, much more... Remember, it's always the Willy Season in the Daily Willograph

YOU'RE HUSBAND

COURT CIRCULAR

HIGHGROVE

Monday: HIS Royal Highness the Prince William of Hearts will drive his Ford Open-Top Prison down to Windsor Royal Polo Ground to present the Quikfit Trophy to the winning team in the final of the Al-Fayed Challenge Series between Major Ronald Ferguson's Wardour Street Irregulars and the Prince of Wales's GM-Free Organic All-Stars.

Prince William will engage in conversation with a succession of pouting teenagers, including Miss Perjuria Aitken, Miss Legovia Kashoggi, Miss Alzheima Saunders, and Miss Cocaina Tara-Boomdeay.

THE TOP 100 FILMS OF THE MILLENNIUM

IN the largest poll of cinema critics ever conducted, 10,000 of the world's top movie experts have drawn up the definitive list of the 100 best films ever made.

1 SAYONARA (1947). Toyota's masterpiece telling of a samurai warrior's unrequited love for a geisha. (219 minutes)

2 LES QUATRE CENTS DALMATIENS (1959). Jean-Paul Renault's masterpiece set in a 19th century Normandie chateau where a group of people gather on the eve of the Franco-Prussian war. (307 mins)

3 GOLDEN SYRUP (1958). Hjalmar Volvo's masterpiece set in 12th century Finland centres on a dialogue between the abbot of Helsingfors monastery and the figure of Death. (418 mins)

4 GROZNY (1936). Nikolai Moskovitch's 12-part Soviet Realist masterpiece set in the Russia of Ivan The Terrible, seen through the eyes of a brave young peasant boy with classic score by Igor Sonovabitch. (219 hrs)

5 MIRACOLO DI ROMA (1948). Federico Ferrari's masterpiece tells the touching story of a young boy's wartime friendship with a monkey. (2 hrs)

6 GOODBYE MR KIPLING (1947). Austin Cambridge's boarding-school masterpiece set in the fictional St Cakes, set on the eve of the First World War. Unforgettable performances from Alistair Sim, Robert Donat and the young David Tomlinson as Morris Minor. (121 mins)

7 STRIKE! (1938). Henry Ford's depression masterpiece recreates the great 1937 cotton-workers strike seen through the eyes of a young girl. (385 mins)

Andrej Lada's Macbeth (1961) set in 19th century Warsaw (never released)

8 KALI WALLAH (1951) Ray Hatterjee's masterpiece evoking the Bombay of his childhood. (312 mins)

(That's enough films. Ed.)

NEW WEST END HITS

Jeffrey Bernard Is Dead
(The Old Pric)
PETER O'Toole reprises his famous role as the Soho drunk and Spectator columnist in the long-running hit *Jeffrey Archer Is Unwell.*

Lenny Bruce Is Even Deader
(Queen's)
TV's EDDIE Izzard stars as famous dead comedian Lenny Henry, and recreates his legendary one-night stand-up with a mystery blonde.

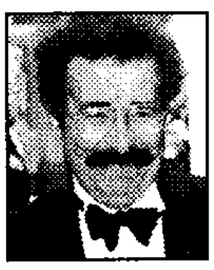
Frank Johnson Is Unemployed
(Comedy)
BORIS Johnson stars as the Editor of the Spectator who had to be brought in to save the ailing political weekly after the disastrous editorship of his now-forgotten namesake.

OPERA

Boris Notgudenov
(Dreary Lane)
CONRAD Black stars as proprietor of The Spectacularlyboringov, a dissident Russian publication only read by two people, Sid and Boris Johnson. *(That's enough hits, Ed)*

TV Highlights

Twins
(BBC2)



TONIGHT'S episode features the bizarre case of the Winston twins. One is a hard-working and respected gynaecologist who has been given a seat in the House of Lords. The other is a self-promoting twit who will do anything to get on television. What is uncanny is that they both have identical ridiculous moustaches and silly glasses. What is the link? Are they clones – or clowns?

ROY of the LAWYERS
MELCHESTER F.C'S ACE GOALKEEPER IS PERFORMING BRILLIANTLY AGAINST TOUGH OPPOSITION-THE SUN NEWSPAPER...
ER... ER...
ROY'S BRILLIANT IN THE BOX!
HE'S DEFLECTED THE CROSS-EXAMINATION!
GRUBBI -LIAR
IN THE DYING SECONDS OF THE TRIAL, ROY PULLS IT OFF...
ROY'S TEAM HAVE DONE IT. THEY'VE WON 80,000-NIL!
WHO'S THE BASTARD IN THE WIG?
PRESS
THERE'S ONLY ONE LORD JUSTICE GREY
THE OPPOSING TEAM HOWEVER ARE GUTTED.
WHERE DID WE GO WRONG BOSS?
WE SHOULD HAVE BUNGED HIM TO LOSE THE CASE.
COME ON YOU LAWYERS.
COOPER

YE TIMES OF LONDON

(Incorporating Ye Coffee House Gazette)

Edited by Master Peter Stoatherd

SHAREBUYERS FLOCKE TO INVEST IN YE CELEBRATED southseabubble.com PROJECT

by Our Man In Throgmorton Street FRED NEEDLE

YE WORLD of shares has been rocked to its foundations by ye brilliant newe scheme of Master Stanley Kalms and his friende Master Paul Sykes, viz for ye members of ye public to hand over millions of guineas for a project so lucrative that ye exacte nature of it cannot yet be revealed.

"All I can relate about this scheme" vouchsafed Master Kalms, "is that it is ye hottest and most modern waye to make money ever devised.

"Anyone who is wise enough to pass over his fortune to myself and Master Sykes will be tapping into ye information carriageway of ye future.

"Make ye no mistake," he concluded, "some people are going to become very riche as a result of southseabubble.com, and they are Master Sykes and myself."

ON OTHER PAGES

Why Oh Why Are Ye Public So Gullible? *asks Sam. Johnson* p. 8

Unfunny Engraving by Hogarth p. 10

Ye Tory Paymaster Master Ashcroft Is An Merchant Of Opium

(reveals Master Stoatherd)

A document has passed into my hand which unfortunately proveth nothing at all *(cont. Court 94)*

POLLY FILLER

IN UMBRIA

I'T's 110º in my kitchen, the toddler's got heat rash and the useless Simon is whingeing because he has been stung by a hornet.

And if that isn't bad enough, I open the English papers (bought at enormous cost from a little shop in Monte Pythanio, three hours' drive away) only to find yet another column by my desperate female colleagues on whether the pashmina is in or out.

For heaven's sake, girls – haven't you got something more important to write about than pashminas?

Isn't there a war on in Kosovo?

And, anyway, who says the pashmina is finished? Just because certain so-called style experts have decided that this useful and versatile garment is yesterday's news, are we all expected to bow down to their infinite wisdom and throw all our beautiful purple, red and blue pashminas into the bin?

Don't be ridiculous. The pashmina is here to stay and all this fuss trumped up by the media means only one thing. Columnists have got nothing to write about because they are on holiday in Italy. Honestly! Get a grip girls – and a pashmina.

© *Polly Filler*

In last week's preview of Caterham Carnival, we stated that there was the chance to win a Harley Davidson. This should have read you had the opportunity to win a photo of a Harley Davidson.

Tandridge County Border News

CLEARANCE of quality conservatives. Bargins galore! Affordable prices/ various sizes.

Basingstoke & N. Hampshire Gazette

Her Peugeot 406 estate collided head-on with a fish at the Big Tree Bend, near Inverkeilor.

Evening Express (Aberdeen)

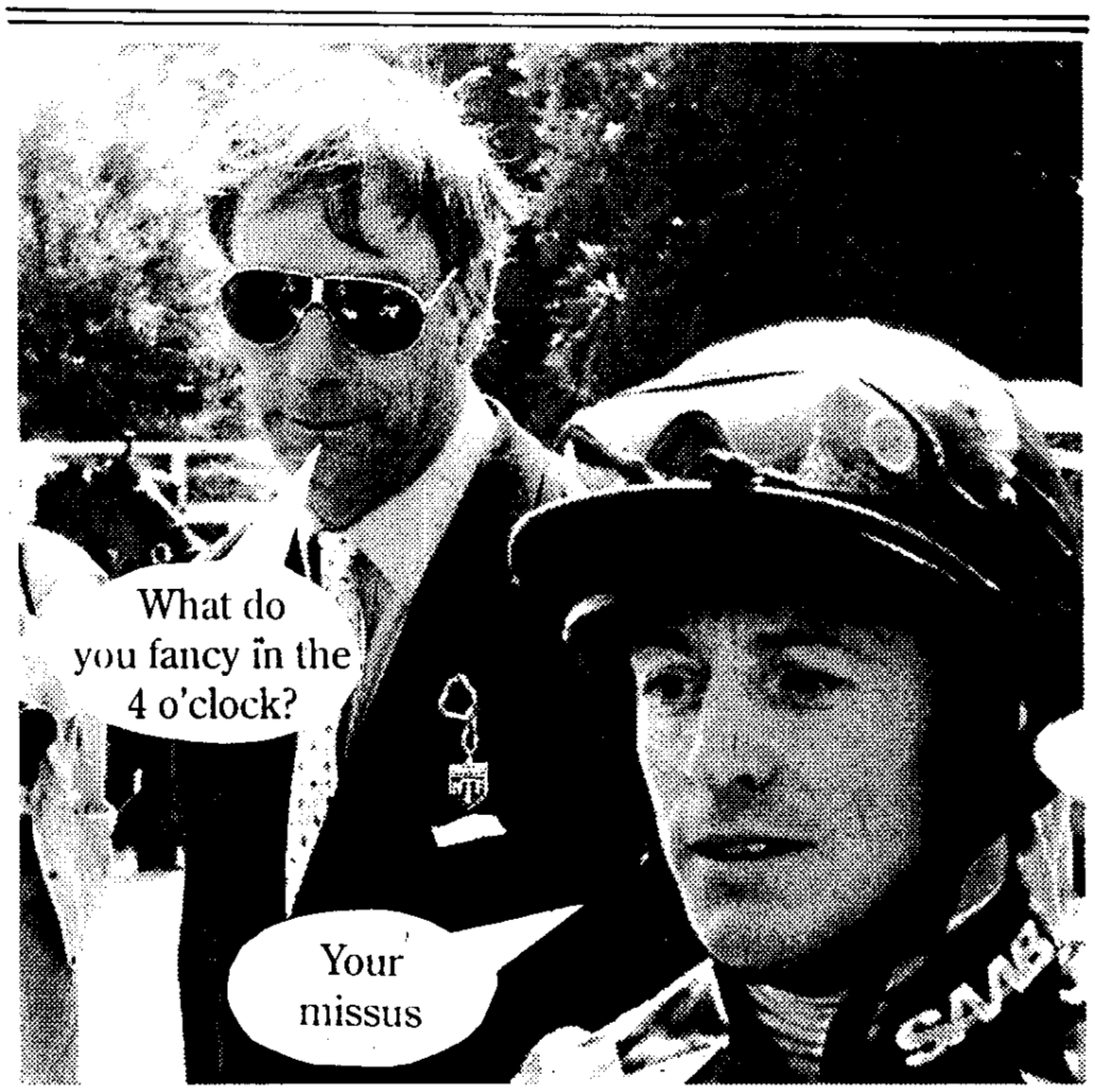
YARDIES RESPONSIBLE FOR CRIME WAVE

by Our Crime Staff **Nick Nobody**

A GROUP of corrupt and drug-crazed villains are behind London's spiralling lawlessness, according to new evidence destroyed last night.

The so-called "Scotland Yardies" operate in gangs and are easily recognisable by their distinctive blue clothes, traditional pointed headgear and habit of driving around making a lot of noise.

They are notoriously incompetent and *(cont. p. 94)*



DIARY

SIR ROY STRONG: One dearly loves talking to The Queen Mother. And vice-versa! That sweet, sweet lady simply loves being told what one is up to, and one is so desperately anxious not to deprive her of the pleasure. The last time one was bidden to luncheon with her, she was thrilled to pieces to hear about the new book one was penning, and quite beside herself to hear of the new pink rhododendron one had planted in her honour.

She was looking gorgeous in white and green, with false cerise sleeves falling to the hemline of her dress and an extraordinarily dashing violet hat with a helmet of turquoise velvet and an off-white flower pinned to the back. Only someone of her breeding could carry it off!

After luncheon, we shared a sofa and listened to some infinitely dreary little pianist plinking his way through something-or-other. Halfway through, she whispered, "Let's be absolute devils!", dipped into her dress-sleeves and brought out a delicious assortment of cream eclairs.

She is quite marvellous for her years, managing to keep up with three chauffeurs, five chefs, twelve ladies'-maids and seventeen household staff. Perfectly exhausting! One really doesn't know how on earth she manages! Bless!

LORD NORWICH: She has a genius for saying exactly the right thing to every single person. Rather over a year ago, at a luncheon party thrown for her by Walter Annenberg, I saw her engaging a waiter in conversation — and she knew exactly what to ask him. Without any notes, she said, "Would you be so good as to get me another large pink gin? Too kind!" — and you could see immediately that this thoughtful gesture had made the man's day. She then went round the room and — no prompting by a lady-in-waiting — asked all the right questions of everybody. "How are your wonderful meringues? Might I have another?" and so forth. She never put a foot wrong!

LORD GOWRIE: She has a passionate interest in poetry. She used to adore Ted Hughes, who would present her with a brace of pike, a dead otter and a chopped-up toad whenever he came to stay at the Castle of Mey. And her memory for poetry is better than that of anyone else I know. I have heard her recite the whole of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' off

THE QUEEN MOTHER AT 99: A CELEBRATION

by heart — and that's just the title! And she is as well read as a woman a fifth of her age: she once confessed to me that she had read the whole of a P.G. Wodehouse novel from start to finish. Remarkable!

***From* THE JOURNALS OF WOODROW WYATT:** I told her how pretty she was looking and she said, "I always try to put on something special in jewellery for you, Woodrow, because I know how much you like it." At this point, I said, "You are a poppet, ma'am" and placed my right hand on her upper back. I then began to rub it up and down in a soothing and strangely sensual manner. I may say she has the most sublime back of any of the Royal Family, up to and including Princess Michael. It was all I could do to restrain myself from sitting astride her on that sofa and rubbing it discreetly with my tongue.

Our talk turned to Nelson Mandela. She asked me if the rumours were true that he was black. I told her that, yes, it was. "So does he play the trumpet?" she asked.

"I'm afraid not, ma'am" I replied.

"What a wicked waste," she said, adding that Louis Armstrong had played the trumpet quite beautifully, and that he'd never felt the need to spend his time struggling against apartheid. "It's just like the Miners," she added. "They don't know how lucky they are to be able to spend their lives in a mine. Think how cosy it must be down there! Such fun!"

She is one of the most politically astute women I have ever met. "Might it not be a rather marvellous idea," she said, signalling to her footman to unwrap me a Bittermint, "were the Royal Air Force to bomb Liverpool? It would be like the war all over again, with everyone singing songs and pulling together! Such larks!" I will suggest it to Margaret in the morning.

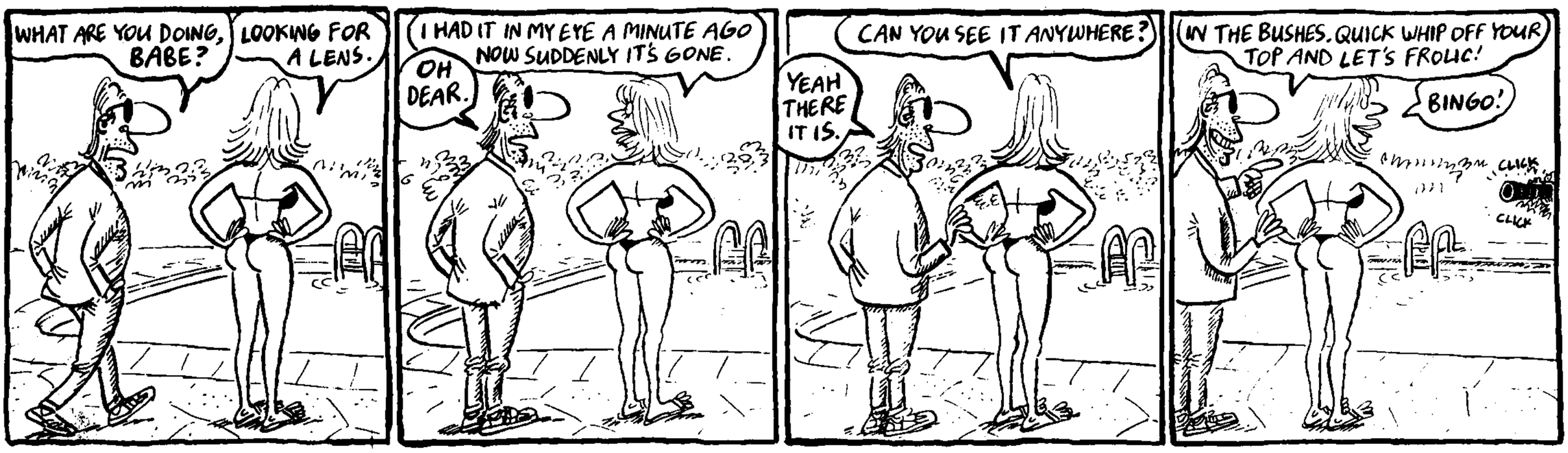
GYLES BRANDRETH: I have never met anyone who could sit perfectly still with such extraordinary dignity – yet a dignity so lightly worn. I once had the great privilege of being asked to Clarence House with a small group of intimates to watch her sitting in an armchair. It truly was a sight to behold: this magnificent lady, 98 years young, sitting with both feet on the floor, one on each side, her head perfectly positioned above her two shoulders. Looking around the assembled company, I saw grown men with tears in their eyes at the sight of such a veteran sitter giving the sitting performance of a lifetime. Of course, the Royal Family have always been superb at sitting, but a little bird tells me it was H.M. the Queen Mother whom we must thank for it.

INGRID SEWARD, Editor, "Majesty" magazine: Without the Queen Mother, Britain would undoubtedly have lost the 2nd World War, and possibly also the 1st. She suffered all the privations of her people, forcing herself to take a day trip to the East End at least once every thirty-five years and insisting on keeping a strict six-inch limit on the meringues she had to store in her bath-tub. Of course, it was the most frightful shock for her when her brother-in-law abdicated. Imagine the horror of finding oneself Queen with three hundred servants, six palaces, ten cars and a worldwide fortune running into many hundreds of millions of pounds. But she pulled through the ordeal admirably, and even at this great age she still struggles to maintain the highest levels of personal expenditure. After all, it's what her people have come to expect of her, and she'd hate to disappoint them.

LORD ST JOHN OF FAWSLEY: She has a splendidly impish sense of fun and an irrepressible *joie de vivre*. She dreams up delightful nicknames for everything and has us all in fits. Jammy-wammy is jam, wopsies are wasps, mo-mo-so is more money soonest. Whenever she enters, the room lights up: you see, she resolutely refuses to scrimp on light-bulbs. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Celeb

LIGGER


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, BABE?
LOOKING FOR A LENS.
I HAD IT IN MY EYE A MINUTE AGO NOW SUDDENLY IT'S GONE.
OH DEAR.
CAN YOU SEE IT ANYWHERE?
YEAH THERE IT IS.
IN THE BUSHES. QUICK WHIP OFF YOUR TOP AND LET'S FROLIC!
BINGO!
CLICK
CLICK

Literary Review

Jet Sounds

The Business
Iain Banks
(Little, Brown £16.99)

THE BUSINESS, dinkily got up and lavishly promoted by Messrs Little, Brown, is Iain Banks's tenth novel (there's also a stack of sci-fi epics produced under the moniker of "Iain M. Banks", but don't let them detain you). A kind of skit on some of the wilder projections of international capitalism, it features a shadowy organisation called, well, The Business, that exerts a powerful though covert influence over most of the globe. A silicon chippery here, a far-sighted technology deal there, a hulking investment in Microsoft back when Bill Gates was still in diapers, *that* kind of thing.

All this is observed, judged and – in the end – archly manipulated by an omnicompetent 38-year-old business *uberbabe* named Kate Telman, whose narrative this purports to be. Clever, sexy, rich, unfazed by the offer of a rolling Yorkshire estate or the hand of a Nepalese prince, and avid to clear some murky double-dealing in her own corporate backyard, Kate is, well, what every heroine should be. Sent in permanent transit around the planet in a succession of exclusive flying machines, whisked up mountains, bowled over the mid-American plains, she doesn't miss a trick.

And yet, as so often happens with these larksome novels by larksome contemporary novelists of Mr Banks's vintage, *The Business* isn't really about international capitalism at all. Essentially it's a checklist of popular and not-so-popular music, in which an author advertises some eclectic style preferences through the medium of a character who spends most of her free time hooked up to a Walkman. You don't believe me? Inevitably, cucumber cool Kate – Oxford degree, enquiring mind etc – is presented as a real highbrow. On her own admission, the bookshelves of her cosy little hideaway in Woodside, Ca., reveals an interest in "German composers, Realist Art, French films and biographies of scientists". This, it turns out, is the reddest of red herrings. What Kate really likes doing is grooving to some cool modern sounds, and the result is a novel practically exhausted by the weight of musicological reference.

There is an influential school of modern literary criticism – pioneered by the inestimable Professor John Sutherland – which ignores the advertised themes of works of literature in favour of unobtrusive but, investigation reveals, hugely significant detail. Does character *x* have false teeth? What illness does character *y* die of? And so on. Using the Sutherland template, the real question lying at the heart of *The Business* is actually "What kind of music does Kate like listening to?" We start off on the flight from Bradford to Heathrow with "Sheryl Crow on full volume". Almost immediately, though, the reader begins to suspect that this is simply a modernist diversion. Fetched up in Nebraska a chapter or so later Kate manages to recognise Little Feat's "Dixie Chicken", whistled to her by an aged retainer, thereby betraying a knowledge of early '70s US alternative rock that I, for one, wasn't wholly convinced by.

Equally compelling evidence, though, comes on a trip from JFK to Hawaii, where the in-flight hoedown is provided by "both Garbage albums separated by Madonna's *Ray of Light*". Now, does this make Kate a post-grunger or just a fan of female singer-songwriters? The subsequent choice – we're now off on a flight to the Himalayas, by the way, for anyone still trying to get a handle on Banks's increasingly irrelevant novel – of Alanis Morisette's *Jagged Little Pill* looks conclusive, only for Kate to decide that it's "entirely inappropriate". Shit!

Wait though, perhaps Kate *really* likes hard-edged girlie rawk and roll? Certainly she asks a Welsh girl called Cerys if she spells her name "like the girl in Catatonia?" And then there's a devious reference to the possibility of her talisman netsuke monkey having "gone to heaven". Didn't the Pixies write a song about that? They did Kate, they did. I was just going to mark her down, finally, as a US Indie Punk chick when blow me if she doesn't spend the train ride from York to London listening to k.d. lang's *Ingenue* ("Where is your head, indeed, Kathryn?") and a dose of Canadian folksters Kate and Anna McGarrigle's *Matapedia* ("not the sort of thing I'm usually into, but just sublime") thrown in to thwart the garrulous taxi-driver who brings her into town along the M4. Curiously, I ended this brisk survey of what today's (and yesterday's) young people are listening to with my opinion of Mr Banks's work mightily transformed. I mean, in the past I used to think him the purveyor of eye-boggling techno-jollies. But disguising a style guide to pop as an iffy novel about global megabiz – now that's sheer post-modern genius.

Vera Line

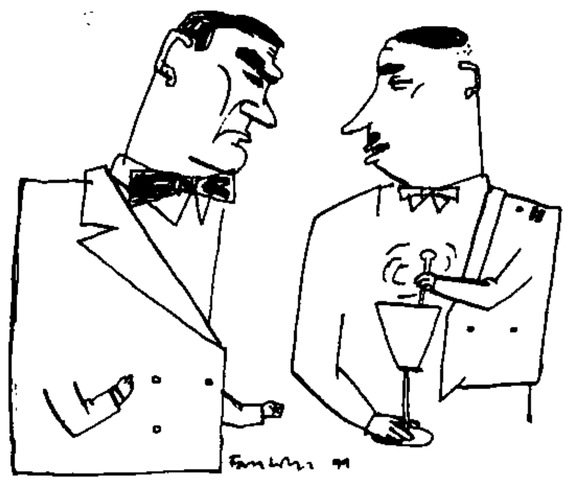
Vera – Portrait of a Marriage
By Stacy Schiff
(Picador, £25)

"COUNTS as one choice," as bargain book labels put it, Vera and Vladimir Nabokov were the ultimate janus couple, she looking out to the world and he looking in at himself. They were both of one mind: she loved him and he loved...him. And without her, he'd have been nothing.

Helpless as a babe in his solipsistic vanity, he could not type or even use a telephone, let alone drive a car. Vera did everything for him, protected him from the world and its enquiries, made all the arrangements, drove him there and carried his bags. Sometimes she delivered his lectures, even marked his students' papers. Perhaps she wrote his books too. Who knows? Stacy Schiff does not go quite as far, but she does credit Vera with particular responsibility for the completion and safe delivery to the world of VN's supposed masterpiece, which on more than one occasion he tried to destroy.

"She saved Lolita from the flames" one recent headline screamed, as though a little girl might otherwise have gone to hell. Whereas in fact what Vera saved was the gloating faux-memoir of a dirty old man written in the kind of tinselly sixth-form arse-for-arse-sake overwriting which so recommends the "literary merit" defence under the Obscene Publications Act.

Too bad they never prosecuted. That they were expected to is clear



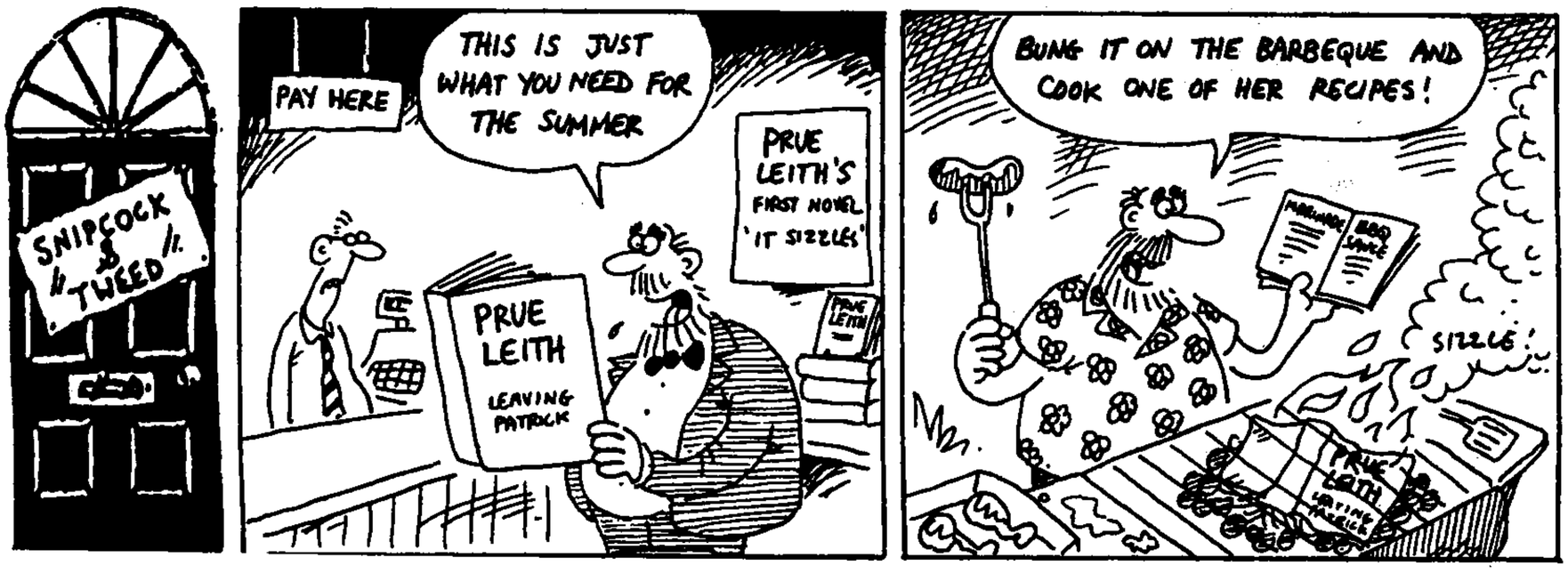
How to annoy James Bond

from the fact that its first publication by a reputable UK firm (initially, of course, only Parisian pornographers The Olympia Press would touch it) included a 19-page appendix of tributes from Lit Crit wits around the world, all praising ad nauseam the "beauty" of its "artistry" etc, and no doubt lifted from the witness statements prepared in case of trial. As with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, D.H. Lawrence's worst novel, Lolita is a "Clockwork Orange" – an unrepresentative work by which, for all the wrong reasons and by all the wrong people, its author becomes chiefly known. Burgess's book was typed up in three weeks, *Rasselas*-like, to pay the bills and went on to become the bane of his life. With *Brideshead Revisited* Evelyn Waugh became the darling of the very readers (middle class, middle brow) he most despised.

But for *Lolita*, VN might have been better remembered for his translations of Pushkin and Lermontov, for his hauntingly evocative memoir *Speak, Memory* and for his other, far better novels, such as *Laughter in the Dark* and *Pale Fire*. In *Lolita* his constant showing-off spoils the whole show, like a puppet-master poking his head through the curtain to wink and smirk at his audience, teasing them for being taken in by his cheap tricks.

If there was no real-life Lolita, Schiff implies there easily might have been. Vera's dutiful devotion may not have been entirely selfless. While the couple were living in Paris in the Thirties another young temptress, a Russian beauty by the name of Irina Guadanini, nearly stole her beloved Vlad away. Vera saw her off by redoubling her own efforts for her husband, making him so dependent on her that no other woman, let alone nymphet, could ever compete. By feeding his vanity, and subjugating her life to his career, she kept out the world and kept in her man.

"We had a very unusual relationship," she told Martin Amis when, in *Visiting Mrs Nabokov*, he went to pay homage at the shrine. She became, in Schiff's words, "the country in which he lived". She even looked the other way when Vladimir took a particular interest in his female students, or haunted the local playgrounds (for the purposes of research, of course), because she knew he would always come back, he needed her too badly. He rewarded her with *The Gift*, his testament to marital fidelity; and she rewarded him with *Lolita* – her gift, as it were, to the world they jointly despised.


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
PAY HERE
THIS IS JUST WHAT YOU NEED FOR THE SUMMER
PRUE LEITH'S FIRST NOVEL 'IT SIZZLES'
PRUE LEITH
LEAVING PATRICK
BUNG IT ON THE BARBEQUE AND COOK ONE OF HER RECIPES!
SIZZLE!

BOOKS AND BOOKMEN

■ THE CURRENT catalogue from diminutive Edinburgh publishing house Mainstream trumpets the arrival in September of two oddly disparate non-fiction titles by the same author, one Nicholas Davies: *Her Majesty the Queen: A Biography* and *Ten Thirty-Three: The Inside Story of Britain's Secret Killing Machine in Northern Ireland*. The blurb tells us that the versatile Davies, the "former foreign editor of Mirror Group Newspapers" (*sic* – he was foreign editor of the *Daily Mirror* in the Maxwell era), has not only "written numerous books on Britain's royal family" but also that he has "specialist knowledge of the politics and terrorism of Northern Ireland".

Both Davies (not to be confused with *Grauniad* investigative hack Nick "Filth" Davies) and his publisher are being too modest, however. Surely Davies's greatest claim to fame is that Seymour Hersh's book *The Samson Option*, published by Faber in October 1991, alleged that he had been an Israeli spy with a neat sideline in arms deals (see *Eye* 780). Following up Hersh's revelation, the rest of Fleet Street reported gleefully that Davies had lied about which school and university he attended, and boasted frequently that he had served in the Grenadier Guards, when in fact he had not. This catalogue of dishonour was too much even for Cap'n' Bob, one of whose last acts before his final swim was to give Davies the sack. No doubt Brenda will be thrilled to have her life chronicled by such a humble seeker after truth.

■ SO, the venerable name of Dillons is to be replaced by that of Waterstone's by October, but Waterstone's Operations Director Brian Worrall has reassured the trade that although locations where both chains trade are under review, "there will be very few closures, possibly even none at all". On the basis of Worrall's past pronouncements, however, Dillons staff may be best advised to start looking for new jobs now.

Just four months ago, the Friends of Dillons campaign enquired as to the future of the Dillons name and received an oddly enthusiastic letter of reassurance from Worrall. "We, like you, are great fans of the Dillons brand," he gushed, adding that the company was "very much committed to developing the existing estate and indeed investing in new Dillons stores", citing the "new and exciting" shop at the Bluewater retail park as an example. Now a question mark hangs over even this "new and exciting" outlet, with one of its sister stores being just a Waterstone's throw away.

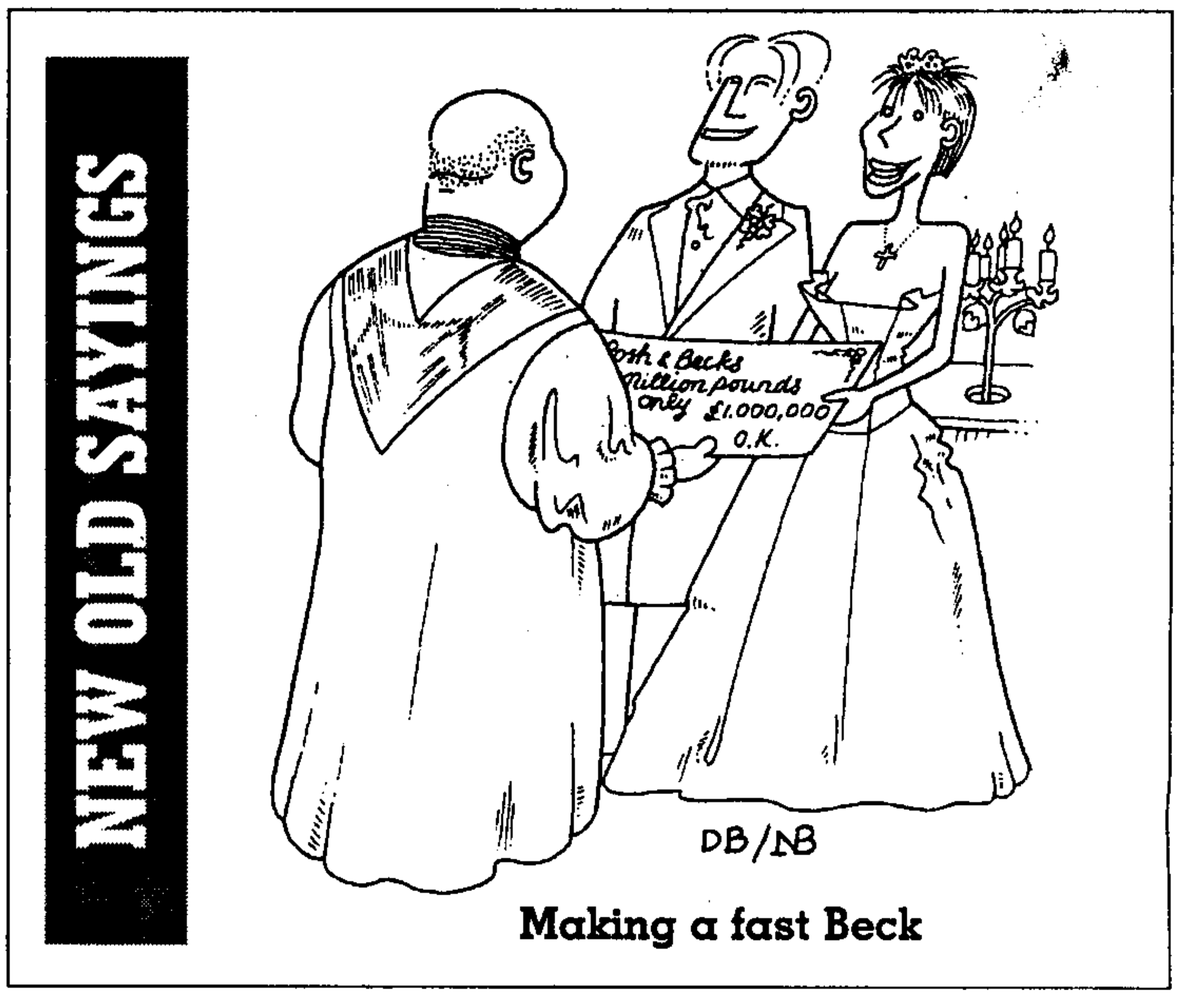
■ ONE of the few reviewers with kind words to say about A.A. Gill's emetic novel *Starcrossed* was Lynn Barber, whose *Observer* review concluded eccentrically, "I imagine it will be the hit of the holiday season, and rightly so." Just how bizarre was this judgement is becoming ever more apparent. So far, *Starcrossed* has sold fewer than 1,000 copies.

■ DESPITE keeping a low profile in recent years, literary agent Anthony Sheil has been receiving a lot of press attention of late. Publishing News broke the story that he had departed from the Sheil Land Associates agency after a boardroom row with his business partner, former HarperCollins boss Sonia Land, over the estate of the agency's late client Catherine Cookson.

The main points of the PN article were passed on to a wider audience by the Times, which credited its source fully, followed by the Express's pisspoor diarist John McEntee and Fiachra Gibbons in the Grauniad, who were less generous in acknowledging their debt to the trade paper. As a result, the Times received a volley of legal letters from Sheil's various learned friends, threatening High Court action if a grovelling apology was not forthcoming over the "unsubstantiated allegations" made by the paper – particularly the suggestion that Sheil took away various manuscripts and documents from Cookson's house on a visit to Newcastle. It is believed that the other organs involved were treated similarly.

By last week, the Times was ready to grovel, making a donation to the Catherine Cookson Trust and stating in its correction that "Sheil was in fact given these papers with the authority of the Catherine Cookson Trust, as her literary agent. All of this material is held by the Sheil Land agency." If this is the case, why were the "sources at Sheil Land" who were happy to tell the trade press and half of Fleet Street about the boardroom bust-up unable to commit themselves at the time on the crucial matter of the manuscripts' whereabouts?

'Bookworm'



Making a fast Beck

FANCY THAT

POSH Spice last night laughed off reports that she has lost too much weight, saying: "I eat as much as anyone else." I've met Victoria many times and she has always looked radiant and full of life. Never have I thought that she was too thin – in fact she's in great shape, especially after giving birth.

— Dominic Mohan, *Sun*, July 26, p. 19

POSH Spice is disappearing. It's hard to believe that Victoria is a new mum. Her stomach is concave… the new Mrs Beckham shouldn't lose any more pounds or David won't be able to find her in their four-poster bed.

— Lorraine Kelly, *Sun*, July 26, p. 34

BLACK Labrador puppires, k.c.reg. Ideal for shooting or family poet, parents can be seen, ready now. £250.

E. Anglian Daily Times

Spaghetti alla Marinara
Spaghetti nach Matrosen Art
Spaghetti with seamen sauce

Menu (Lake Garda)

I never sneer at glossy magazines, including *Hello!*, because they are the social chronicle de nos jours, the Goncourt brothers of the late 20th century. In 300 years time, historians will get more out of *Tatler* than *Hansard*, if Tony Blair doesn't abolish it soon – *Hansard* that is.

PETRONELLA WYATT
Spectator

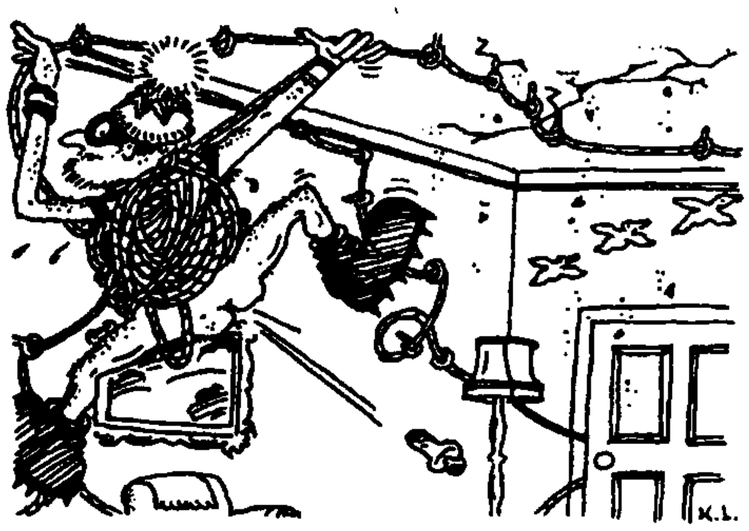
Her [Nicole Kidman's] eyes – especially on the cover of Rolling Stone – are wise, knowing, confident, intriguing. She's a Kabuki Circe with Frank Sinatra's crushed fedora strategically placed for maximum suggestibility. She's Helen of Troy, the young Guinevere, Brandi Chastain, all feminine eros morphed into a kind of meta-goddess.

Washington Post review
of "Eyes Wide Shut"

...the Star Wars notion of democracy is no better than a fuzzy abstraction, a cover story for the mystical Manichaeanism of the Jedi, who by all appearances are a masculine cult of chastity and purity straight out of Wagner's Parsifal. Like the Teutonic composer, Lucas has tapped into a tremendously powerful Jungian current of pantheistic myth. However one interprets it, this is where the heart and soul of the Star Wars saga lies, and the tiny tastes of it we get in The Phantom Menace make the rest of the movie seem like didactic dithering at the edges of some incomprehensible Asmovian empire.

ANDREW O'HEHIR
Sight and Sound

Pseuds Corner



Matthew Barney's (b. 1967) work gives one the sense that there are no physical or material limitations, or if there are, Barney's intention is to ram through them and get us through to the other side. In his video and installation *Anal Sadistic Warrior* he strapped himself with climbing gear, ropes and rigging to climb around the room completely naked except for a harness to suspend him and an anally inserted frozen petroleum butt plug. Suspended from titanium ice screws in the walls and ceiling, he created a spectacle of fanatical endurance, ritual, and fetish, his own highly stimulated transcendant experience of the event communicated to the viewer in the form of video documentation. The artifacts of the event remain along with footage of the primal scene.

YVETTE BRACKMAN
Very

Poonkhin Khut's works evoke a **jewel-like sense of luminosity and precariousness**. His audio installation, Pillow Songs, combines digital sound, found objects and graphic imagery to present a shadowy underworld of atmospheres and aural fragments inspired by the intimate stains left on pillow. The ambiguously charged presence of these found textiles serves as a starting point for a consideration of the pillow as a record of personal space.

The retiring posture required to fully engage with the work, together with the dark and brooding atmosphere of the gallery space, removes us from the usual remoteness of public space towards a more intimate and tactile encounter. The soundscapes suggest aural residues, secret histories and the passage of time. Noise becomes music, music becomes noise, silence becomes music.

From "embodying the information age",
Australia Council for the Arts

CONTRIBUTORS: E. Strobes, Andy Pearson, Martin Kewitsch, M.H., Anon.

£10 paid for entries

IN THE BACK

BSE ENQUIRY

Vaccine to be done?

THE sensitive and unresolved issue of the possible contamination of vaccines by bovine products affected by BSE (see *Eye* 970) came up again at the Phillips inquiry into BSE on July 21.

Four of the country's top scientists, the members of the Southwood inquiry into BSE in the late 1980s, gave evidence. They were Sir Richard Southwood, Professor of Zoology and Pro Vice Chancellor at Oxford University; Lord Walton, a world-famous clinical neurologist and former president of the General Medical Council; Sir Anthony Epstein, a former head of the department of pathology at Bristol and Dr A.W. Martin, a distinguished vet who had just retired as director of the Moredun research institute in Edinburgh. All four were given a torrid time by the counsel to the inquiry, Paul Walker, on the subject of the vaccines.

He wanted to know whether the Southwood committee report had given a "misleading picture" of the dangers to humans from widely-used vaccines, almost all of which contained bovine material, much of it from cattle infected by BSE. The committee had described such dangers as "remote" – exactly the same adjective they had used to describe the dangers of people catching BSE or associated diseases from eating BSE-infected meat. Close questioning of the scientists revealed that all four of them had regarded the dangers of human contamination by BSE-infected vaccines as, er, anything but remote.

Mr Walker asked Sir Richard Southwood: "In your view, at the time, the degree of hazard from medicinal products was greater than the degree of hazard that applied in the case of oral ingestion?"

Sir Richard replied: "Yes". Later, he told the inquiry: "We really thought the medical problem was severe... We were very conscious, all the way through, of the worry about the vaccination programme. And these were very real deaths. One hundred and seventy deaths had been estimated by the Chief Medical Officer."

If vaccination with BSE-infected vaccines was much more dangerous than eating BSE-infected meat, why did the Southwood committee describe the risk from both with the same reassuring adjective – "remote"? All four scientists were asked this question and all four wriggled with their replies. Sir Anthony Epstein explained: "The seemingly reassuring – I do not accept that it was – use of the word 'remote' was done on purpose because the consequences for the vaccination programme, for the use of medicines, would have been really quite disastrous if the public at large had been alarmed by this... it could have had very serious consequences for public health."

So the committee watered down their published warnings about vaccines. But all four scientists went on to argue with some passion that although their report had appeared to be mild on the subject, they had made every conceivable effort to alert the Department of Health and its relevant agencies to the dangers of BSE in vaccines. All four said they were satisfied that their anxious if private warnings about vaccines would lead to "appropriate action" from the Department of Health.

So what action was taken? The Department issued a statement which emphasised the dangers to the vaccination programme from any public panic about BSE and blandly reiterated the view of the Southwood Committee that the risk of infection from medicinal products was "remote".

Fastening on that magic word "remote", the ministry gave the vaccines the all-clear. There was no need, officials concluded, for pharmaceutical companies to take any steps whatever to insure against the possibility of contaminated vaccines. So the Department of Health and its Committee on Safety of Medicines coolly junked the Southwood committee's anxious, if unpublished, warnings about the dangers of BSE-infected vaccines.

To this day, no one knows what action was taken to dispose of the five years of stocks of vaccines which had been piled up to initiate the vaccination programme. No one knows whether any of those vaccines compiled before the BSE ban were used on unsuspecting patients, or whether any of the deaths from CJD – a killer disease associated with BSE – can be ascribed to such vaccinations.

PENSIONS

The Wheelers of justice...

WHEN Robert Maxwell stole £400m from his company's pensioners in 1991, there was a huge public outcry which is still going on today, a government inquiry and a change in the pensions law.

When the Tory government under Margaret Thatcher stole £164m from some of the poorest pensioners in the land, the government went on denying it had stolen the money and splashed out another million quid trying to keep its ill-gotten gains. They have now eventually agreed to pay the pensioners £356m: at least 94 per cent of the stolen money plus interest. So great was the media outrage at this blatant government theft that the court decision to pay the money back was reported, on July 31, in eight lines in the *Independent* and eleven lines in the *Financial Times*.

Eye readers, on the other hand, have been kept closely informed of the great National Bus pension scandal. In 1986, the Thatcher government privatised National Bus, whose various companies employed about 40,000 people. The companies were flogged off to the new private monopolists in the trade (Stagecoach, Firstbus etc). In 1991, the directors of the old nationalised company wound up its huge pension fund, bought annuities for the pensioners and coolly transferred the £164m surplus in the fund to the Department of Transport. The surplus represented about £20 a week per pensioner.

No one, not even the busworkers' unions led by the Transport & General Workers Union, objected at the time to this blatant theft. (The T&GWU changed its line later and campaigned loudly and effectively for their pensioner members.) For at least ten years, the only sustained protests came from retired Blackpool busdriver Frank Wheeler, who, from his home near Dumfries, bombarded the Department of Transport with furious objections. His protests were waved aside as the ravings of a deaf old nutter with a personality problem.

In 1996, Frank Wheeler took his case to the Pensions Ombudsman, Julian Farrand, whose job was to decide pensions disputes quickly and cheaply. Dr Farrand duly announced that Wheeler was quite right, that the pensions surplus had been illegally swiped and should be paid back at once to the pensioners. The government refused to do so. At least a million pounds of government money was splashed out on setting up new trustees in the Official Solicitors Office and in the City. These new trustees obstinately refused to accept Frank Wheeler as a trustee. He was, they insisted, unsuitable for such a post since he was old, slightly deaf and lived in Scotland. After months of "negotiation" between the new trustees, the government eventually agreed to cough up £168m plus interest: a total sum of £356m. If this had been agreed, as it should have been, when Dr Farrand made his declaration three years ago, the taxpayer would have been saved at least a million pounds which have gone instead into the pockets of already wealthy pensions lawyers and bureaucrats in the Official Solicitors' Office.

The settlement was formally agreed by Mr Justice Lightman in the High Court on July 30. He praised the work of Frank Wheeler and recommended he should be paid £5,000 to cover his out-of-pocket expenses during his 13-year campaign.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Porton Downer

SHORTLY before being sacked in Tony Blair's reshuffle, armed forces minister Doug Henderson made a brave stab at improving the image of the chemical and germ warfare laboratories at Porton Down. The labs have become an official testing centre for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons – which meant, according to Henderson, that Porton Down could now "play a key role in rhe campaign to ban chemical weapons on a global scale".

Some good news would be welcome for Porton Down. In October this year Wouter Basson, the "Dr Death" who ran South Africa's chemical and biological assassination programme during the apartheid era, will stand trial for his crimes. He will claim that, far from preventing proliferation, Porton Down scientists helped with his grisly programme.

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission certainly believed that "the development of the programme would not have been possible without some level of international cooperation and support". In advance of possible new revelations at the trial, the Eye approached the Ministry of Defence about Basson's allegations. After pondering for a month, the ministry issued a denial which curiously managed to confirm the basic facts in his story, albeit with a rather different interpretation.

Basson claims that in 1981 he attended an international conference in Texas to gather information on biowarfare. Though the MoD is "not aware" that anyone from Britain was present, it admits that our military scientists often attend such gatherings "to benefit from exchanges of information". In view of the close relations between the Porton Down staff and their American counterparts at the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, it seems most unlikely that Whitehall was unaware of Basson's presence.

Basson also claims that a former member of the South African Medical Services, Dr Brian Davey, travelled to Porton Down in 1992. The MoD confirms the visit, saying that "such visits are not unusual: officials involved in biological defence from a range of countries visit to discuss scientific issues". It adds that although "Dr Davey briefed scientists at Porton on some details of the South African work on defence against chemical and biological weapons...no information useful for developing an offensive chemical or biological programme was passed to him." (Our italics.) One recalls the old adage: my weapons are all defensive, yours are offensive. Or, as the government explained when dropping anthrax on remote Scottish islands, "it is only by a full examination of methods of attack that we can develop effective means of defence".

What of Wouter Basson's allegation that, a few months before the election of April 1994, panic-stricken British and American officials told the South Africans to close down their chemical and biological warfare programme before its secrets fell into the hands of the new ANC government? The MoD flatly denies the story – but then admits, in the next breath, that shortly before the end of white rule it did indeed ask South Africa to wind up the programme, because of "long standing government policy to prevent the proliferation of such capabilities".

Why, then, hadn't it made a fuss earlier? Simple: "The British government became aware of the existence of a South African biological and chemical warfare programme in early 1994." So although Wouter Basson was travelling the world to develop South Africa's biowarfare capacity during the 1980s, and South Africans were visiting Porton Down in 1992, the British government apparently never suspected a thing – until, coincidentally, just before the ANC took over.

Perhaps, having issued its statement, the MoD will now try telling it to the marines.

POLICE ROUND-UP

Same old Bullocks

"I HONESTLY believe that somebody will come forward and give that vital evidence about who did this." So said Ben Bullock, in the Mail on Sunday last week after he was given a mere "caution" for his part as second-in-command of the botched murder investigation into the death of Stephen Lawrence.

Mr Bullock seems to have conveniently forgotten that somebody did come forward with "vital evidence" within hours of Stephen's death – but that no one bothered to interview him for 24 hours. This was the skinhead who came to be known as "James Grant", who gave details of three of the key suspects. What's more, two anonymous letters and three anonymous telephone calls to police, received over the next 48 hours, confirmed some of Grant's information. Crucially details he gave of another racist stabbing by the gang he called "the Krays", was confirmed by that victim himself, Stacey Benefield – an indicator, if ever there was one, that Grant knew what he was talking about.

Here are a few more details that Mr Bullock appears to have overlooked for the purposes of his interview with the Mail on Sunday's crime man. He says – extraordinarily and without challenge - that the race issue "was raised too early on". What can he mean? The key eyewitness, Stephen's friend Duwayne Brooks, described hearing the gang shouting "What what nigger" before launching their murderous attack. "Grant" and the anonymous informants also detailed other vicious racist stabbings involving the same people.

To the charge that police were slow to arrest in the light of the information they had in those first crucial hours, Mr Bullock says: "There was a risk we might have alerted the others to get away. What we were going for was something called evidence. There wasn't any. If we'd moved fast we'd have been criticised for not waiting until we had some evidence."

Sadly Mr Bullock forgets both his superiors' admissions to the Lawrence inquiry that there was sufficient evidence to make an early arrest. And anyway, when the arrests were finally carried out two weeks later, the officers the cause of grossly bungled and sporadic surveillance – hadn't actually managed to gather any more evidence. In fact, suspects had been seen and allowed to remove black bin liners of clothes and other items from their homes. Staggeringly, surveillance team priority was given to watching a young black man suspected of theft, rather than the five suspected of Stephen's murder.

And it appears that one of the key suspects – David Norris – may still have been "alerted to get away". He was not at his mothers' house when the police launched their co-ordinated dawn arrests and for some strange reason, there was no immediate search for him. His mother was allowed to take him in to the police station, the following Monday – three days later.

And then Mr Bullock's most outrageous comments that the Lawrence family manipulated the death of their son "for political purposes" and that their "publicity agenda" contributed to the bungled operation. He clearly has learned nothing from Stephen's murder, nothing from the damning findings of Kent police, which catalogues wholesale failure and incompetence on the part of Mr Bullock and his murder squad colleagues – and nothing from the public inquiry.

Life of O'Brien

THE acquittal of three Scotland Yard police officers on Friday of the manslaughter of Richard O'Brien, after an inquest jury had ruled that the father-of-seven had been "unlawfully killed", should come as no surprise.

It is not unusual for our justice system to fail to find a culprit when people have been "unlawfully killed" while being detained or arrested.

In recent years there has been a dreadful litany of controversial deaths in custody – Winston Rose, Shiji Lapite, Omasese Lamumba, Oliver Pryce, Alton Manning, Ibrahima Sey (all black) – where damning inquest verdicts against police or prison authorities have failed to result in any criminal convictions.

Of course, an inquest verdict against unnamed individuals or groups is a long way from a trial jury being willing to convict a named officer. But it is hardly surprising that the families of the dead feel cheated by the apparent contradiction in verdicts, particularly as they usually come at the end of a lengthy battle with the authorities to rigorously investigate and place all the evidence before any kind of public forum in the first place.

The case of Mr O'Brien (an Irishman) was no exception. He died after police, called to a disturbance at a christening party in South London – and not involving Mr O'Brien – went to arrest him for being drunk and disorderly. They held him face down on the floor, with his hands cuffed behind his back, for more than five minutes. His widow, Alison, alleged they had ignored his pleas that he could not breathe. The officers said he was struggling violently.

Mrs O'Brien battled for five years to bring the officers to account for their actions before a criminal jury. The Crown Prosecution Service had twice refused to bring a criminal case – even after the inquest verdict. It was forced to reconsider, after her successful judicial review.

But she feels doubly cheated, because the Old Bailey jury last week heard somewhat different evidence from that given to the Coroner, back in 1995.

Crucially it related to the original police investigation into Mr O'Brien's death in April 1994 and to the testimony of independent witnesses. The coroner heard complaints from several, that police had not properly recorded their statements. One woman, Christina Jordon, who witnessed events from her bedroom window, made a formal complaint to police after the inquest. Another, Paul Cook, who had described officers kneeling on Mr O'Brien's prone body, told the inquest that the words "the force acted properly" in his statement were "not my words – not at all". He said he felt too intimidated by the investigating officers to insist they took them out.

Because Mr Cook's second agreed statement made reference to the inquest, it was excluded from the Old Bailey trial and, amazingly, his first statement including the embellishments was read, unchallenged, to the jury.

Also the Old Bailey jurors were denied their request to see copies of the police manuals and rules relating to arrest, detention and restraint – an issue fully explored and contested at the inquest. Old Bailey judge Mr Justice Astill told the jurors the only evidence they could consider was that put to them by the officers, i.e. that procedures had been fully complied with.

Next week an inquiry into the CPS handling of the case, the Butler report, is expected to be highly critical of prosecutors. The O'Brien family is also to lodge a formal complaint into the police handling of the case.

The problem for the O'Briens is that, once again, they will have to rely on police investigating police.

Virdi's Requiem

AS THE clock ticks down towards Metropolitan police sergeant Gurpal Virdi's industrial tribunal (a preliminary hearing, at which he will be represented by the Commission for Racial Equality, takes place this Wednesday), and his disciplinary hearing in September (see *Eyes* passim), the Met's prosecution team might like to compare his treatment with a similar case which was investigated in his area at the time of his suspension in April 1998.

In March, a National Front activist was arrested in the area when he was caught plastering buildings with stickers carrying racist slogans. When searched he was found to be carrying a large amount of NF material. Even more disturbingly, he told officers that he was well acquainted with several of their colleagues, including one who worked on the same team as Sergeant Virdi, and that he socialised with them regularly in local night clubs. Although a report was compiled on the incident and forwarded to the CPS, the suspect's house was not searched, and reports that he had worked as a security guard at a local Islamic centre were not followed up. No forensic tests were undertaken on material which was left at the premises of the local Racial Equality Unit, including a "voodoo" doll surrounded by NF stickers.

In April, following his complaint that his colleagues had failed to take a racist knife attack seriously, Virdi was also accused of distributing racist material carrying the NF logo, using police computers. Virdi's home was searched– for six hours, by a surveillance team normally used for investigating terrorists. They insisted on unscrewing fixtures in the Virdis' bathroom, searching their children's school satchels, and removing their son's computer for examination.

Recent Parliamentary questions from MP Peter Bottomley, a vocal supporter of Sergeant Virdi, highlighted the different outcomes of the two cases. He was told by Home Office Minister Kate Hoey that in the case of the NF activist, "inquiries were carried out to establish the extent of any connection between the suspect and any police officer, and that no such connection was discovered". What is more, the CPS "declined to prosecute as they considered the evidence available was insufficient". In Sergeant Virdi's case, the CPS came to the same decision back in February (10 months into his suspension) – but by the time internal proceedings taken against him by the Met go ahead, he will have been suspended from duty for at least 18 months.

Cheshire chat

AN INTERNAL memo currently doing the rounds of the Cheshire Constabulary takes the form of a spoof voice mail message.

"Thank you for calling the Cheshire Constabulary. If your crisis is small and community-based with no legal knowledge or experience required to resolve it please press one for a van load of Specials who will be with you on Friday or Saturday evenings before midnight.

"If your concern is larger and can be resolved by one or two unenthusiastic visits from a fat old copper, but not at weekends or after 1700hrs, please press hash," *etc, etc.*

Chester Superintendent Peter Hindle failed to see the funny side – he has described the memo as "obnoxious" and ordered an internal enquiry.

The super has obviously been stung by the advice for contacting senior officers: "Please ring between 9am and 10am weekdays, courses, sickness, meetings and shopping permitting."

Straw dodge

WHAT WILL scupper Jack Straw's latest attack on human rights, the wheeze of locking up the innocent-but-deranged without trial, will be – if other criminal justice initiatives are an indicator – vociferous, old-fashioned, selfish NIMBYism.

No one will want the proposed secure units for the potentially psychopathic at the bottom of their gardens. When the Tories first came up with the idea of paying private security companies to lock up difficult children instead of keeping them in local authority care, they ran into local opposition and planning problems. Eight years on, only one of the five proposed child jails, opposed by Labour in opposition, but now embraced by New Labour, is actually up and running.

Recently Ministers have been forced to put their hostel for paedophiles, who have finished their jail terms, inside Nottingham prison walls, and even that has run into a storm of protest from local residents.

In the City

HERE we go again! Once more the *Sunset Times* would have the world believe that the "bosses of some of Britain's biggest insurance companies could face criminal charges following a Scotland Yard investigation into alleged mis-selling". This time (25 July) it is endowment mortgages. Two years ago it was personal pensions. Then the confident prediction was that directors of Legal & General, Guardian Royal Exchange and Sun Life of Canada were on their way to the slammer, or at least court, "by the end of the year" over the multi-billion mis-selling scandal.

Now the prediction is that whistleblowing salesmen will be standing up in court testifying against their boardroom bosses from (again) Legal & General and Guardian Royal Exchange plus Prudential and Allied Dunbar over the continuing mis-selling of poorly performing but high commission producing endowment mortgages.

Ironically this prediction from Insight's very own Mystic Meg David Leppard came just days after the – not on this occasion – Serious Farce Office decided against launching a prosecution of the pension mis-sellers who the *Sunday Times* had forecast would be in court by the end of 1997!

It also followed a carefully orchestrated campaign against greedy mortgage providers launched by Downing Street spin meisters with the enthusiastic backing of the *Daily Mail*. Mortgages, in other words, were hot. Locking up suits for locking in homebuyers to unsuitable mortgages sounds good news.

However, as the *Eye* pointed out over the pensions scandal(*Eyes* 930 and 957) but the *Sunset Times* curiously omitted, the Financial Services Act makes it all but impossible to prosecute directors for mis-selling by their companies.

For while Section 47(1) does indeed make it a criminal offence to make a misleading, false or deceptive statement when selling an investment, Section 47(3) goes on to state that "it shall be a defence for a director "to prove that he reasonably believed that his act or conduct would not create an impression that was false or misleading". That is get-out-of-jail card number one for any director charged over the actions of his commission hungry sales force.

Get-out-of-jail card number two is that it would almost certainly be necessary to further prove that any director had been "reckless" in allowing endowment mortgages to be sold. This again is a subjective test which the SFO's pension decision suggests is considered more than a little difficult to pass in a criminal court. With the stock market enjoying its longest post-war boom arguments about the recklessness of suggesting endowment policies would succeed in repaying a mortgage could be a little difficult. Especially as jurors would be forced to decide between experts all of whom would have to admit the flaws in any long term market prediction.

This said it is still a mystery as to why – other than to generate fat fees and commissions for the companies and their salesmen – supposedly respectable insurers continues to sell such a tainted product?

Endowment mortgages still make up 30% of all mortgages despite regular barrages of criticism from financial advisers and complaints from purchasers who lose out when they stop paying early and receive little or nothing back because of the heavy front end loaded commission charges. The selling also continues despite the constant warnings in recent years of the need to top-up some existing policies if mortgages are to be repaid.

But even if it is possible to rebut the mortgage suits' claim that they "reasonably believed" endowment mortgages were a good thing for homebuyers as distinct from themselves – how to prove that the continued sales drive was "reckless"? How to deal with their second line of defence that they relied on the advice of actuaries or similar experts that endowments could still pay off? Especially given the serious lack in British law of the wonderful American concept of "wilful blindness" by those who should know better.

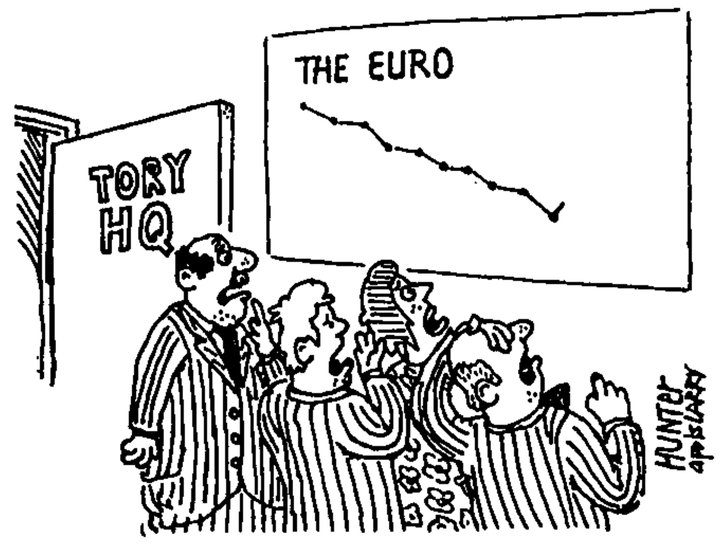
Also there is the major problem that, as the fiasco of the Great Western Trains prosecution proved, there is no culture of corporate responsibility in Britain which allows for a conviction even if people are killed as a result of the company and its directors' undiluted greed for profit and cynical disregard for safety. The Southall train crash is the latest in a sorry line of legal failures to hold directors criminally responsible for the fatal failings of their employees and their company. Add to that the Herculean task of proving the umbilical evidential link between the employee and the boardroom and it is no surprise that insurance company directors are not likely to be losing any sleep about an early morning wake-up call from the inspector.

THE CRITICAL reports into the City Police's failure to contain or prevent the Carnival against Global Capitalism violence in June omitted crucial details in the view of those with knowledge of the events. It failed to name those officers who would have been in the front/firing line had fortunately and entirely coincidentally they not been on holiday or taking that day off. Why such officers were allowed or considered it acceptable to be off when the anarchist event was on is an interesting question. What is clear is that this did indeed leave a gap which was filled by less experienced juniors who duly took much of the blame. Those who see the Masonic conspiracy in much of what happens among the Square Mile's finest also suggest that this may help explain a reluctance to name names.

THE FAILURE after three months of the might of the FBI to track down insurance fraudster Martin Frankel somewhere in Europe is a cause for growing embarrassment in Washington. Despite being a relative stranger to Europe or indeed to travel, Frankel has managed to stay ahead of the Feds since he flew from New York to Rome in early May leaving behind a huge black hole in several small insurance companies.

Just how much Frankel went on the run with also remains a mystery. As pointed out in *Eye* 979,when newspapers such as the *Wall Street Journal*, slower on the uptake, were talking about the man who stole a billion, Frankel was operating a sophisticated Ponzi or circular money scam. For eight years he had artificially inflated the assets of the companies he bought with fictitious trading profits.

The real losses may be around $200 million. But after expenses, and Frankel could certainly spend, the



rip-off may be the money sent to his Geneva bank account-up to $80 million. How much of that in cash he was able to extract and how much in diamonds he kept are still unclear.

At least one theory about Frankel's prolonged silence –little or nothing has been heard from him by those who knew him for almost a month – is that he may be dead. Killed by those he paid to ensure his safety from Uncle Sam.

More credence is given to the suggestion that he is already holed up in or near Israel looking to take advantage of that country's reluctance to extradite Jews who take advantage of its law of return.

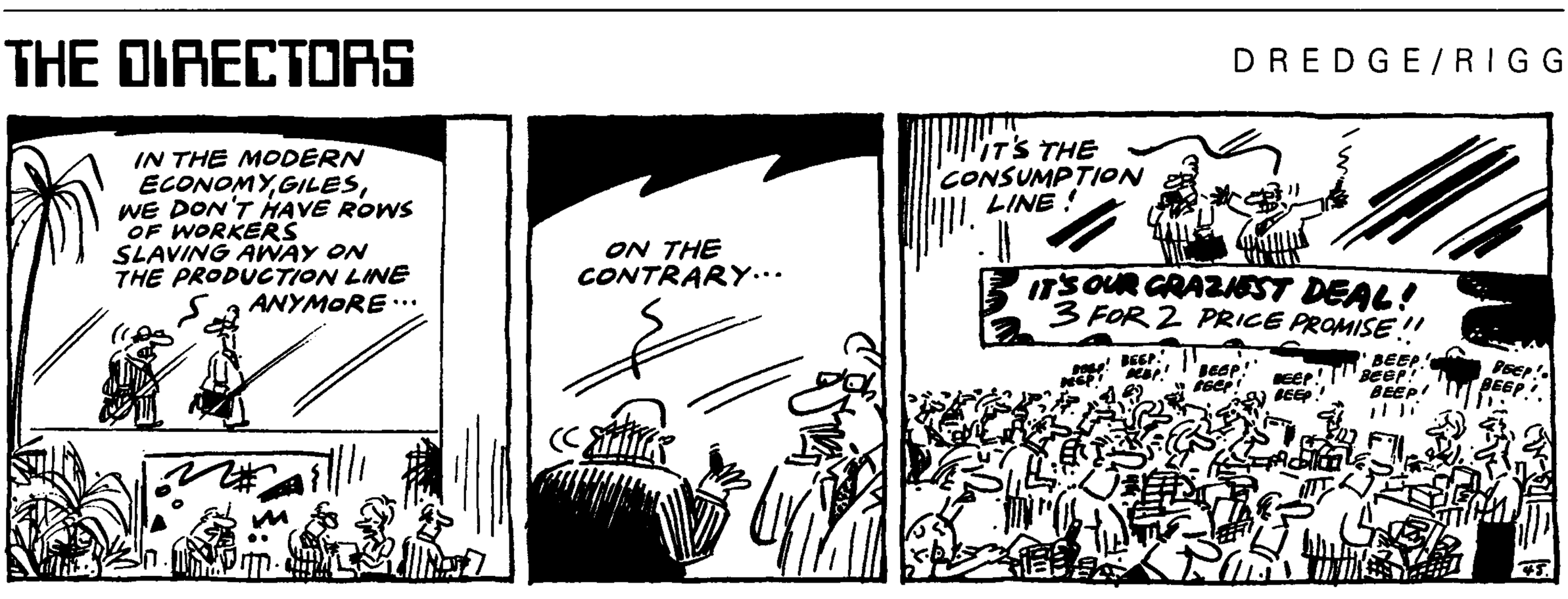
Frankel arriving under his own name in Israel would be unlikely to be let in once he was wanted. But what if he sneaks in via the porous Jordanian or Egyptian borders using one of his several passports? Once in it would be up to the United States to apply for his extradition and that is easier said than done. In a recent ruling the Israeli courts held that an American teenager accused of a brutal murder could not be extradited only tried in Israel. The same wisdom of Solomon has been applied to fraudsman Joseph Prushinowski wanted in several countries including Britain. So if he made it to Israel Frankel could be home if not free then at a much lower cost than if sent back to the US to face a probably effective life sentence.

Other suggested hideouts are Eastern Europe or Iran, like Cuba, places where the US writ does not run. But such refuges are both expensive and dangerous for a man with millions.

Meanwhile among those embarrassed by the Frankel scandal is former Hanson director Eddie Collins who accepted an invitation to join the advisory board of the bogus St Francis of Assisi Foundation based in the British Virgin Islands. American Collins, a long time close associate of Hanson's co-founder, the late Gordon White, was flown round the US by private jet to meetings with and for Frankel, who he knew as 'David Rosse', including a session with the insurance regulators in Mississippi whose questions finally caused the scam to unravel.

The foundation was supposed to be donating $50m to Catholic causes from its supposed $2bn assets. Both figures were bunkum. Collins tells friends he never saw any financial statements, never received any payment and would anyway only have been paid (be it generous) expenses. Whether that keeps him out of the civil litigation frame from Frankel's victims remains to be seen.

'Slicker'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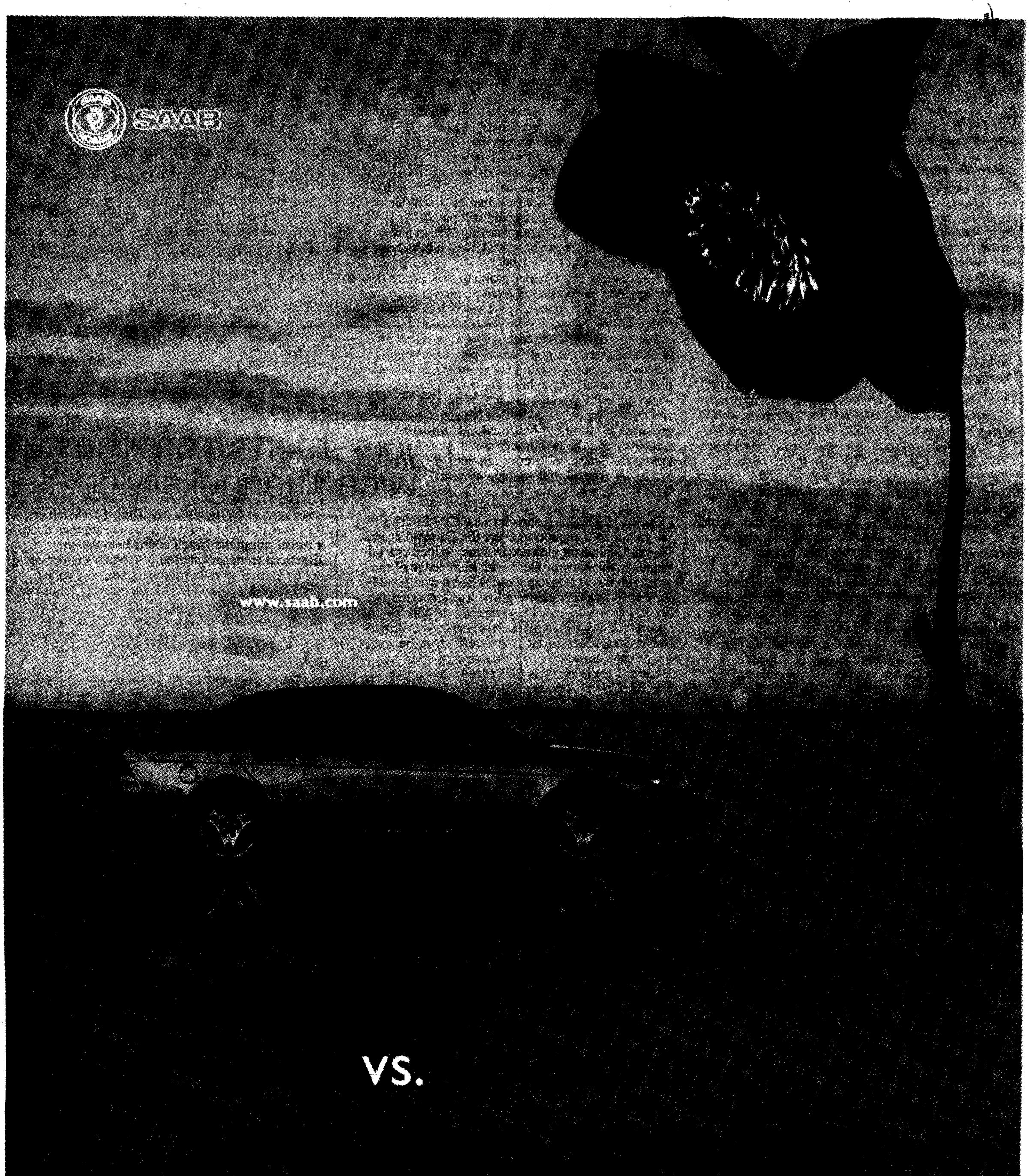
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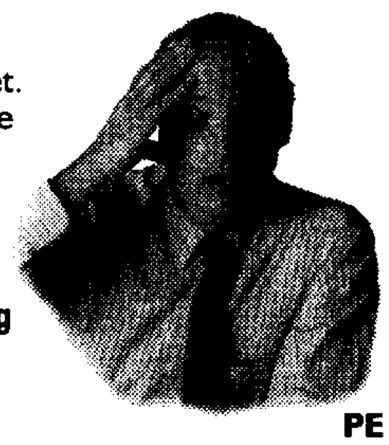

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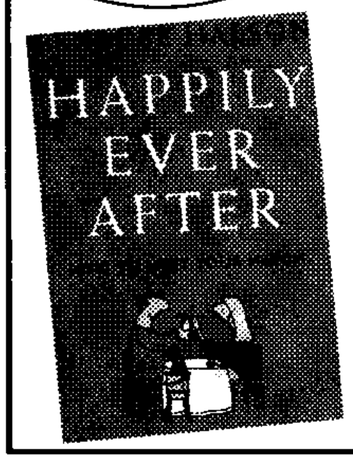

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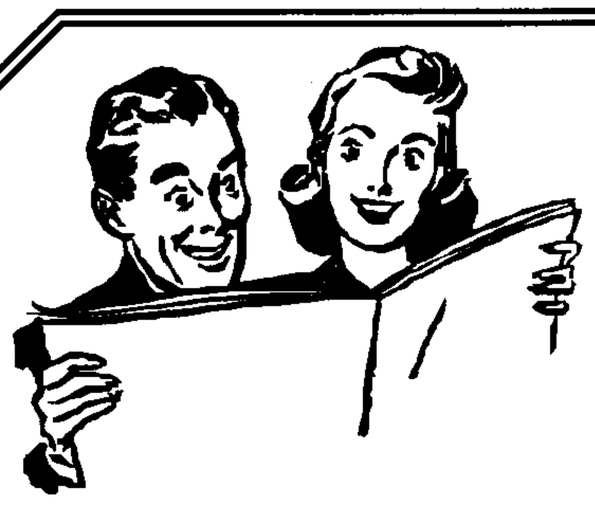

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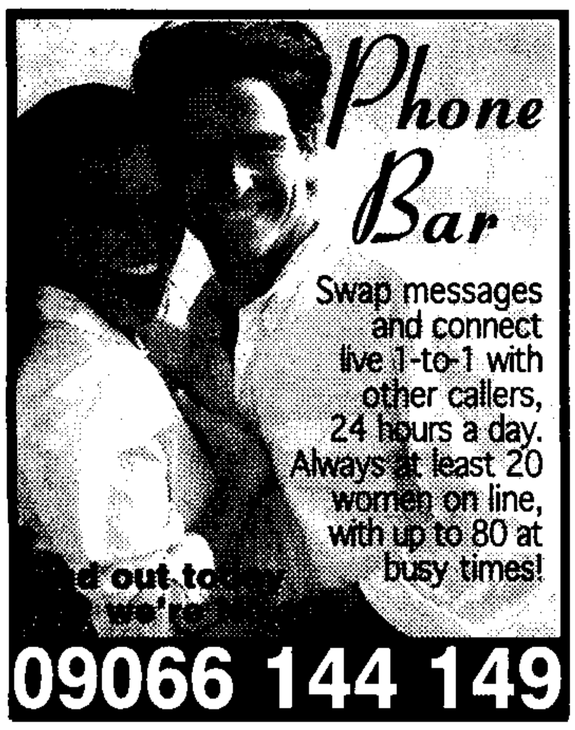
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BELIEVED M.D.'s LIES – now £20,000 debts. NATWEST 56-00-60, 93134436 – proof ifrequired@hotmail.com

PROMISING ACTOR, training at London theatre school, needs financial help with fees Please call James 0181 363 9189, or e-mail: jimmrad@aol.com

HELP NEEDED to fight off greedy multi-national. Woolwich 10-80-12, 43875609. THANKS.

FUNDING URGENTLY and genuinely needed for trapeziste. licoricelillies@hotmail.com – Abbey National 090126 44502787. Need £6K.

LAW STUDENT – huge potential, restricted by poverty. Donations please. Barclays 20-71-06, 00766372.

MATURE STUDENT of medicine requires funds to complete clinical years. Grateful for any assistance. Halifax 11-08-92, 0049829.

YOUNG ACTRESS needs £3,500 to complete training and prevent homelessness. Please help Lloyds 30-15-53, 2787895.

£2100 FOR GUIDE DOGS. Will cycle across CUBA November '99. Donations: Nationwide 07-00-30, 51929466. Email: manuel. fernandez@was.thenhs.com

PLEASE HELP. Desperate working single mum. Too much income for benefits, too little for £10,000 debts. Box 0382.

DESPERATELY NEED £4,000 to escape intolerable home environment. Please help. Box 3781.

£1MILLION NEEDED – desperate. NatWest Bank, Kilburn High Road – account number 38268736.

HELP RELOCATING. Threatened by gun toting idiot. £10,000 needed. NatWest 60-60-40, 58627952. Thanks / Grateful.

REFORMED ALCOHOLIC ARTIST desperate for fresh start. £3500 debts. Eternal thanks. HSBC 40-46-06, 01213067.

ANXIOUS MOTHER – 4 children, seriously ill father. Huge debts, desperately needs money to keep home. Thankyou. Alliance/Leicester 72-50-02, 55220081.

YOUNG MATURE STUDENT needs help to finish final year of English Classic's degree. Any help gratefully accepted. Account number 30375411, sort code 20 39 53. Box 0482.

DESPERATE ALONE law student needs £5000 to survive. Barclays 20-29-23, 70442534.

NON-CORPORATE EX-PAT needs at least £15,000 to relocate young family from currency crisis region to very expensive UK. Thanks assured. Lloyds 30-99-90, 6608685.

MASTERS PAINTER requires £1000 for final exhibition. Phone 01782 763867.

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STUPID BOY, far too young to be in here, desires clever woman who'll sink to my level. Box 0682.

REFINED, ARISTOCRACTIC lady, 28, with interests in music, riding, fencing, seeks suitor from titled English gentry with appropriate resources. Box 1982.

MALE, 54, SLIM, SHY, 5'7" unhappily attached – WLTM slender, pretty female. Bath/Bristol. Box 0782.

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HANDSOME GENTLEMAN of 50, seeks very rich woman to love. Box 2282.

ASSERTIVE, HANDSOME publisher, M/39, seeks sleek, younger, unassertive, erotically curious female partner – 07050 398943

DIRTY THIRTY year old doctor with nice bedside manner seeks naughty forty year old woman with chest symptoms to share looming bed crisis. Box 1882.

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